



Duquesne University:













POLITICAL PARTIES  
AND  
ELECTORAL PROBLEMS





# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

By

p. 24

ROBERT C. BROOKS

*Joseph Wharton<sup>1887</sup> Professor  
of Political Science  
Swarthmore College*



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POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

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H-Z

To  
MY MOTHER

JUN 5

1935



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## PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to interpret American political parties with a view primarily to the needs of voters and those who are soon to become voters. With that purpose in mind the nature and activities of parties generally, their development, present condition, and the principal problems of reform which they present in the United States, are taken up in order. Since the active contact of citizens with parties, and through them with government, is most directly exercised by the ballot, the voting process in all its forms and details is made the heart and center of the discussion.

For two decades the author has been engaged upon the task of interpreting political parties to undergraduates in the class rooms of Cornell University, the University of Cincinnati, and Swarthmore College. Designed for use primarily as a college text, such adaptability as the book may possess for that purpose must be credited largely to the students who for so many years have been not only the author's auditors, but his frequent and helpful critics as well. Next to them he has had most in mind throughout the large number of voters enfranchised by the Nineteenth Amendment. With the needs of the latter in view, particular attention has been given to every point in connection with American party organization and life affecting the interests of women voters. It is hoped further that the book may have an appeal to editors, lecturers, statesmen, and men of affairs generally—in short, to all citizens who are seriously concerned in any way with the problems presented by parties to the American electorate.

Outside the class room the writer has taken as active a part in the political life surrounding him as academic free-

## PREFACE

dom permits, on one or two occasions perhaps so "perniciously" as to raise questions regarding the limits of that freedom in the minds of his more timorous friends. It is his sincere conviction that without such vital contact the teaching of party politics degenerates into an empty, wholly uninspiring formula. As a local party official for many years, as candidate for minor public offices on sundry occasions—unsuccessfully, be it recorded—as a campaign speaker, and even between campaigns as advocate of woman suffrage, the League of Nations, municipal reform, and other causes, he has enjoyed many vivid moments, made innumerable pleasant friends, also some stimulating enemies, and incidentally learned to modify various of his preconceptions regarding the problems discussed in these pages.

Delightful and valuable as that experience has been, it represents, of course, but one narrowly circumscribed aspect of party politics with its countless facets and its millionfold appeal. Remembering the necessary limitation of the contacts open to a single individual, the author counts himself extremely fortunate in the assistance and information so cheerfully and frankly given him by friends of every shade and grade of political belief and experience—public and party officials, administrators, reformers, independents, colleagues in other colleges and universities, and, not least in good will and instructiveness by any means, the common or garden variety of ward and county politicians. These helpers are far too numerous to mention here, but wherever possible grateful acknowledgment is made in footnotes throughout the volume. Particularly valuable was the advice given by them in regard to Active Participation in Politics, the subject of the last chapter, which it is hoped may be of service to those young men and women who realize that citizenship begins, but does not end, with the mere poking of a ballot into a box at the polls.

For assistance of an even more exacting character the author is indebted to Prof. Thomas H. Reed of the Uni-

## PREFACE

versity of Michigan and Dr. Anna M. Michener of the Statistical Division of the National Bank of Commerce in New York, who have read and offered valuable suggestions on large parts of the manuscript, and to Prof. Arthur N. Holcombe of Harvard University, who performed a similar service for the work as a whole. To his wife, who has been a zealous colaborer in many political movements, the obligations of the author for help written as amanuensis in every line and given at innumerable points as keen and kindly critic, are beyond measure and recompense.

ROBERT C. BROOKS.

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE,  
SWARTHMORE, PENNSYLVANIA.



"In America the great moving forces are the parties. The government counts for less than in Europe, the parties count for more."

—JAMES BRYCE: *The American Commonwealth*.

*PART I*

NATURE AND ACTIVITIES  
OF PARTIES GENERALLY



# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## CHAPTER I

### NATURE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

POLITICS offers many avenues of approach. Party activity is the most obvious of these, but it is by no means the only one. The American citizen who is interested in public affairs encounters an extraordinarily large number and variety of voluntary organizations each more or less engaged in the work of influencing the conduct of government. Some of these associations limit themselves to a single issue or a single field of activity, as, for example, the Short Ballot Organization, the Anti-Saloon League, the Civil Service Reform League, the American Protective Tariff League, the American Association for Labor Legislation. Others cover in some fashion the general activities of the government of a city, a state, or even of the nation. An alert city club keeps up a fairly constant fire of comment and criticism upon the acts both of commission and omission of all the departments of municipal government. Bureaus of research offer constructive and elaborate suggestions to city or state governments. The National Voters' League turns a "Searchlight" on Congress every month and incidentally manages to illumine various other branches of the federal government. The League of Women Voters discusses every political question, national, state or local, of interest to its membership. In addition to these purely political associations a large num-

Voluntary  
political or-  
ganizations

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

ber of organizations primarily concerned with other fields—labor unions, church federations, commercial and professional bodies, and the like—are accustomed to take action whenever their interests are affected by government.

Value of  
their contri-  
bution

All things considered, the value of the contributions of such organizations to our public life is beyond question. They offer opportunities for constructive statecraft which no one interested in politics can afford to ignore. Nevertheless, they are supplements to, rather than substitutes for, political parties. At least it is evident that the latter perform certain essential functions not undertaken even by such of these other organizations as are primarily political in character.

Making  
nominations  
the test of  
a political  
party

Most distinctive of these characteristic functions of a political party is the designation of certain of its leaders as candidates for public office. In such legal definitions of political parties as may be found scattered throughout the statute books of our states the making of nominations is regarded, and rightly so, as the fundamental test of a political party. It has the further merit of being easily applied for administrative purposes. Voluntary political organizations other than parties, such as were mentioned above, engage in manifold activities but they do not place tickets in the field. They may even discuss the records of party candidates and advise the public to make selections among them as is the custom of various Voters' leagues, but this is not the same thing as selecting them in the first instance and thus accepting responsibility for them. If any such organization decides to transcend its ordinary limitations and actually names candidates it acquires at once the characteristic of a political party.

Importance  
of the  
nominating  
function

The making of nominations is not only the distinctive activity of a political party, it is, moreover, a public service of the greatest importance and significance. Especially in a country like our own with an extremely large number of elective offices and frequently recurring elections the volume of work involved merely in selecting candidates is enormous in the aggregate. No doubt parties often do



## NATURE OF PARTIES

this work imperfectly. At times they are accused of nominating men of known incompetence and bad reputation; at other times it is charitable to assume that they have been deceived in the character of their own nominees. Nevertheless, nominations must be made at the appointed intervals if the work of government is to go on. And among our numerous organizations devoting themselves to political ends parties alone stand ready at all times to assume this burden.

To formulate party principles and party policies may seem a much higher duty than nominating candidates. In this connection, however, it is worth remembering that to a large part of any electorate naked principles and policies make but a faint appeal. Only when they are dramatized by forceful and sympathetic personalities, fighting in the public arena for power to realize them, do they elicit a full popular response. Certainly it is much easier merely to formulate political ideals and loudly call upon all good men for their support, than to undertake the further steps of securing representative and responsible candidates and backing them in their campaign for office. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why so many individuals and voluntary political organizations other than parties content themselves with the first of these activities. However this may be, the political necessity and social utility of the additional functions which parties alone undertake must be conceded frankly.

**Formulation  
of principles  
and policies**

In an oft-quoted passage from Edmund Burke party is defined as "a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed."<sup>1</sup> Usually this statement is criticized as idealization rather than definition, as an attempted glorification by the brilliant Whig pamphleteer of his own party in contrast with the irresponsible cabal of "King's Friends" whom George III had gathered about him. And as it stands the statement does

**Burke's  
definition of  
party**

<sup>1</sup> *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, published 1770, *Works*, vol. i, p. 530.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

indeed seem to lay stress upon "principles" and "the promotion of the national interest" to the exclusion of other and perhaps lower ends for which parties have striven not only in Burke's time, but later. However, the words quoted above should be read in connection with the following sentences from the same paragraph:

For my part, I find it impossible to conceive that any one believes in his own politics, or thinks them to be of any weight, who refuses to adopt the means of having them reduced into practice. It is the business of the speculative philosopher to mark the proper ends of government. It is the business of the politician, who is the philosopher in action, to find out proper means toward those ends, and to employ them with effect. Therefore every honorable connection will avow it is their first purpose, to pursue every just method to put the men who hold their opinions into such a condition as may enable them to carry their common plans into execution, with all the power and authority of the state. As this power is attached to certain situations, it is their duty to contend for these situations.

Included the making of nominations

The additional sentences make it clear that Burke's conception of party, however ideal in other respects, included the very practical function of bringing men forward for office. Finally, it involves the idea that a body of men who hold to certain political principles with sincere conviction and a sense of their importance will, *ipso facto*, take the further step of selecting and supporting men who, when placed in office, will endeavor to realize these principles. In other words, a party necessitates to this extent a higher voltage of conviction than those political associations which do not make nominations.

Significance of platforms

While the formulation of party principles and party policies is not the most distinctive of party functions, it is nevertheless of high importance and great social utility. It is an activity that, as we have noted, is common not only to political parties, but also to other organizations which do not make nominations, and which therefore are not to be counted properly as parties. In the great majority of cases, however, the programs laid down by such organiza-

## NATURE OF PARTIES

tions are admittedly partial in their scope. Party principles, on the other hand, are put forward as possessing comprehensive virtues; party platforms tend to become longer each year as the result of efforts to cover, or appear to cover, every governmental question of importance. Although many "planks" may be evasions, misrepresentations, or pious platitudes, it is the party theory of itself that the principles it holds furnish all that is needed for higher guidance, while the policies it proposes supply a detailed program quite sufficient for the general conduct of government in case the party is given power. And of course in each case these principles and policies are advocated, if not as absolutely ideal, at least as distinctly and demonstrably superior to those of other parties with which it is contending for supremacy.

Party professions of faith, it will be observed, include both principles and policies. Logically it is quite possible to make a distinction between the two, although application of the distinction is not always easy. The principles of a party have been defined as "the durable convictions held in common by its members as to what the state should be and do. . . . The policy of a party, on the other hand, comprehends all that the party does in order to establish its principles; it includes, therefore, the whole of the party's conduct. Principles are disclosed in the end which is sought; policy in the means employed for the attainment of the end."<sup>1</sup>

**Definition of  
party prin-  
ciples**

By definition party principles have a greater permanence and a higher validity than party policies. The latter must square with the former, but in practical politics considerable stretching is sometimes necessary to make them seem to do so. In such cases, however, it is always possible to maintain more or less convincingly that the changes made are matters of policy only; or that they are justified

**Relation of  
principles to  
policies**

<sup>1</sup> Anson D. Morse, "What Is a Party?" *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. xi, p. 68 (March, 1896). Illustrations of the distinction between party principles and party policies in American political history will be found in chaps. iv and v.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

by great emergencies or exceptional conjunctures of affairs never likely to recur; or that, indeed, they are necessary to the life of the state itself. To clinch the latter argument it may be added that the preservation of the state affords the only possible means of returning to the original principles of the party after normal conditions have been restored.

Adjustment  
of principles  
and policies  
to con-  
temporary  
needs

As a matter of fact, therefore, party policies shift fairly rapidly with the current exigencies of politics, and party principles themselves are subject to new interpretations over longer periods of time. To survive, a party must adjust itself to new conditions. At no time in its career, for example, did the Federalist party suffer from a dearth either of principles or policies, but these failed to keep step with the democratic movement of the times, hence its disappearance. On the other hand, a party may be abundantly supplied with principles and policies which are too far in advance of prevailing ideas, and for that reason it may suffer failure. Radical minor parties usually ascribe their small following to this condition. Many of the adherents of the Progressive party believe that its disappearance after 1912 was in part due to the same cause.

"Looking  
for issues"

Cynics are accustomed to say that a party may survive without principles, merely by force of its organization, its traditional following, and the power of patronage. The most practical of practical politicians are, however, fully aware of the danger of such a situation. Usually they make vigorous efforts to extricate themselves by "looking for issues," as the popular phrase has it. For a party which appears to be without principles naturally falls a prey to the suspicion that it is nothing but a selfish combination of office seekers unable or unwilling to solve the problems of the day. And in our national politics at least a party which finds itself in this situation is in danger of a serious decline of power or even of a break-up. Thus inability to meet the slavery issue led to the disappearance of the old Whig party and hopelessly split the Democratic party prior to the Civil War.

## NATURE OF PARTIES

As principles are considered to hold good over extended periods of time, parties inspired by them are presumed to be able to count upon a somewhat prolonged lease of life. With many transmutations and vicissitudes the present Democratic party can be traced back to the beginnings of our national life. Both of the great English parties can claim a continuous existence of more than two and a half centuries. It is said that every atom of a man's body is replaced by others in the course of seven years. A process of similar character goes on more slowly perhaps in the case of parties which persist through long periods. However, the time element affords neither a definite nor a convincing test of party character. Certainly none would deny this character to the late Progressive movement, for example, simply because of its rapid disintegration after the campaign of 1912. In that campaign it played a rôle of major importance and was fully equipped so far as candidates, platform, and organization were concerned, to perform all the functions of a party. True, it failed in its effort to gain control of the government, but success in this particular is not a necessary qualification for party standing. The Prohibitionists furnish a case in point. As a matter of fact a party may remain in a minority throughout the greater part or even the whole of a long existence and yet perform every function characteristic of such an organization. Although the immediate aim of a party is to gain control of the government by placing a sufficient number of its own leaders in office, failure in this aim does not preclude the possibility of exercising a great and beneficent influence. From the social point of view, therefore, the immediate success or lack of it on the part of individual parties may be a matter of small importance. What is important is that such organizations shall contribute helpfully in the main to the development of national life. Taking this broader point of view, it is evident that parties which have but a small following, or which endure for a short time only, may nevertheless be of great interest and significance.

Permanence  
of parties



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Eras of  
good feeling

The derivation of the word "party" (Latin, *pars*) calls attention to the fact that ordinarily the people of a country are divided into two or more political camps, each contending for the control of the government. Sometimes this is not the case. At the outbreak of the World War, for example, party strife was followed by a truce and an alliance in several of the belligerent countries. In our own country during the so-called "era of good feeling" (1816-32) there was only one party in the field. Apparently the great mass of the people of the country were in general agreement at this time as to the broad principles and policies upon which the government was to be conducted. To one who looks below the surface, however, the "era of good feeling" was in reality a "period of personal politics."<sup>1</sup> Groups following rival leaders contended vigorously for office. But even at this time the prevalence of personal interest was not absolute. While each of these political groups professed allegiance to the principles of Jeffersonian Republicanism, it also sought to make distinctions concerning these principles which it regarded as of fundamental importance.

Parties and  
class  
interests

Except during such unusual periods, however, a party is, as the derivation of the word itself implies, a part of the people, arrayed against other similar parts, each contending for the mastery of government. Hence it has been argued that the principles and policies of each party, no matter how strongly they are advocated as an ideal guide for the whole conduct of the state, must in fact be only partial views strongly tinged with the particular interests of the group or groups making up the party. Therefore "the true end of a party," according to one writer—"the end . . . of which it is itself conscious—is, in ordinary times, to promote not the general interest, but the interest of a class, a section or some one of the many groups of citizens which are to be found in every state in which there is political life, an interest which is always

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems*, p. 31.

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something other—and generally, though not always, something less—than the national interest.”<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to deny the general validity of this observation. In some cases a party frankly admits that it is made up largely of members of a certain class and that it is working primarily in the interests of that class. This is true, for instance, of the Socialist party which, wherever it is organized, claims to be the party of the workers. It is substantially true also of a number of other parties in European countries where party division is carried to an extreme unknown in the United States. On the other hand our two principal parties which seek to make converts in all ranks of society naturally deny this accusation. Nevertheless it is frequently urged against them by their radical opponents. There seems to be no reason, however, to doubt the sincerity of a party simply because it asserts that its principles and policies are designed in the interests of all. Each class in society wears its own spectacles and is usually unconscious of that fact in the observations it makes of political conditions and needs.

Whether or not they admit the charge that they are dominated by class interest large parties and small parties alike maintain that the programs they advance represent the real interest of the state or the people as a whole. Of course there is a motive for so doing. Only by making this contention good or at least acceptable to a majority of the people can a party hope to attain power and maintain itself therein. Quite apart from this self-seeking motive, however, the assertion may be fully justified by the facts in certain cases. History records numerous instances when a given party has actually laid down principles and executed policies which were apparently in the best interests of the state at the time. In the case of a party containing a considerable majority of the people drawn from all social classes it is easily conceivable that the collective group interests which help to frame its platform may enumerate policies coinciding largely with the best inter-

Party denials of class interest

Parties profess to act for the best interests of the state



<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. D. Morse, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

ests of the people as a whole. And indeed the interests of a small class may conceivably coincide for a time with those of the state, especially if the class concerned is of superior intelligence or of superior political or economic ability. On the other hand, it is of course true that parties dominated by narrow class interest have at times torn an already decadent state to pieces. With the possible exception of such cases the formulation of principles and policies by political parties, even when tinged by class interests, is a public service, a public service, moreover, which parties alone render on an adequate scale.

Party plat-  
forms *vs.*  
ideal plat-  
forms

The question may well be raised, however, as to whether there is not a certain unfairness in comparing actual party platforms with ideal platforms assumed to be in the best interests of the state. As a rule it is only the actual party platforms which have sufficient power and organization behind them to determine the action of government. Too often the so-called ideal courses of policy are discovered only by historians long after the event. If they exist contemporaneously it is only in the brains of philosophers or of a few *intelligentsia*, whence, indeed, they may emerge in due time to pervade and bless the commonalty. Unquestionably a great public service is thereby rendered, although in the end the ideas of the thinkers must be incorporated in actual party platforms before they may hope to be realized. As a matter of fact, however, actual party platforms and ideal formulations of policy do not compete with each other. To contrast the two to the disparagement of the former is, therefore, rather pointless.

Discipline  
and toler-  
ance of  
parties

Like numerous other associations pursuing political ends either exclusively or as part of their activities, parties are voluntary associations. Rules, customs, traditions, discipline of a sort, and distinctions between leaders and followers they do, indeed, possess, but they are seldom enforced with the thoroughness and impartiality characteristic of the enforcement of law in a well-ordered state. In this genial tolerance lies one of the reasons for the peculiar affection in which the typical partisan holds his party. It



## NATURE OF PARTIES

seems so much closer to him, so much more human in its aims and struggles, than the stern, just, powerful, and far more distant state. In an extremely happy passage Professor Merriam has given expression to this feeling. "The party," he writes, "is in a sense a political church which does not require very regular attendance or very strict creed; but still it provides a home and it 'looks after' the individual if he pays the minimum of party *devoirs*, consisting in the acquaintance with and occasional support of some one of its lords, even though a minor one. Or, changing the metaphor, the party is a sporting interest, like a baseball team in which the individual is intensely interested from time to time. . . . He boosts his team; he bets on it; he rejoices greatly in its triumphs, and goes down with its defeats."<sup>1</sup>

Political associations other than parties are frequently somewhat exclusive as to their membership. Parties cannot afford to take such a stand. They can never have too large a following. Naturally they are most interested in enrolling actual voters, but they by no means neglect other classes of citizens, or even individuals who have not acquired citizenship, particularly if the latter are soon to be added to the electorate. Thus we find parties encouraging the naturalization of foreigners, granting party representation to inhabitants of territories or colonies, and organizing clubs of young men soon to become first voters or of women in states which had not yet granted them the suffrage. Indeed there is scarcely a class, race, creed, group, or persuasion of any sort to which the partisan politician does not make a specialized appeal.

Although tolerant in their discipline and cordial in their invitations to prospective adherents, modern political parties are characterized by enormous and highly specialized organizations. In this respect they differ sharply from the parties of earlier centuries. "The parties of classic antiquity impress the reader of history, and still more the

Appeal of  
parties for  
members

Organiza-  
tion of  
parties

<sup>1</sup> *The American Party System*, p. 402. Cf. also G. Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics*, p. 83.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

modern party manager, as unwieldy and undependable in the extreme. This is true particularly of the ancient democratic parties. The followers—it would hardly do to call them the supporters—of the Gracchi seem more like mobs than parties.”<sup>1</sup> In aristocracies or states with a limited suffrage the most important political conclaves often had much the character of family gatherings, and the political decisions reached by them took the form of what to-day would be called “gentlemen’s agreements.”

Size and  
efficiency of  
modern  
party or-  
ganizations

So far as party organization is concerned, a veritable revolution was brought about by the extension of the electoral suffrage which occurred in the United States roughly between 1810 and 1840, and subsequently in Great Britain, France, Belgium, Norway, and other countries with liberal governments. To handle the hundreds of thousands and millions of new voters thus created political managers were compelled to devise forms of organization of a capacity, extent, and flexibility hitherto unknown in the world’s history. As to the practical efficiency of this modern political machinery there can be no doubt; indeed, this is made the chief point in the indictment against present-day parties. For with it there has come a certain preponderance of party organization as against party principles and a centralization in the hands of party leaders and bosses of powers subject to misuse for corrupt interests and private ends. Nowhere in the world have these developments, both good and evil, occurred on a greater scale than in the United States. Unquestionably they present the greatest internal party problem which now confronts us.

Definition  
of a political  
party

Summing up the various elements presented in the foregoing pages a definition may now be offered, as follows:

A political party is a voluntary organization of individuals or groups of individuals advocating certain principles and policies as superior to all others for the general conduct of government, and which, as the most immediate method of securing their adoption, designates and supports certain of its leaders as candidates for public office.

<sup>1</sup> A. D. Morse, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

# NATURE OF PARTIES

## BOOK NOTES

### ALSO

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FURTHER STUDY OF POLITICAL PARTIES<sup>1</sup>

ALTHOUGH there has been a great increase of interest in the subject of recent years, the number of general works devoted entirely to American political parties is still quite limited. Of those which rank as systematic treatises the most valuable is \* C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System* (1922), which deals with the function of the political party in the community and examines the composition of parties "in terms of political and social forces, rather than of historical evolution or of political mechanism." Earlier general works in this field are: P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics* (2d ed., 1917); M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Party System in the United States* (1910), being an abridgment of the second volume of his earlier extended work, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties* (2 vols., 1902); J. Macy, *Party Organization and Machinery* (1904); and J. A. Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems in the United States* (1903), which is still of great value, particularly for its historical chapters (I to VIII, inclusive). C. L. Jones, *Readings on Parties and Elections in the United States* (1912), is a collection of well-chosen materials in this field. For general reference purposes the most extensive and helpful work is A. C. McLaughlin and A. B. Hart, *Cyclopedia of American Government* (1913). It is to be assumed without further

<sup>1</sup> No effort has been made to include all works on the subject in the Book Notes following each chapter. Preference has been given to the more useful books of recent date in the English language, although a few foreign works of exceptional importance have been included. In several of the lists the one or two works of each class which, in the experience of the author have proved most useful to students, are designated by an asterisk. Those who desire to provide themselves with a small working library on American political parties may find these indications helpful in starting their collection.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

repetition, except when justified by the special merit of some contribution, that the foregoing books may be consulted with profit in connection with the topics dealt with in every chapter of the present volume.

Special articles in periodical literature are referred to copiously in footnotes, frequently with some comment as to their value. Students should be encouraged—required would be better—to read one or more metropolitan daily newspapers, preferably of differing political faiths, for current political news, on which they should be held responsible from day to day for oral or written comment. Reading of one or more journals of opinion is also to be advised, choice to be made from the weekly *New Republic*, *Nation*, *Freeman*, or *Springfield Republican*. Students interested in social problems should be referred to the bi-weekly *Survey*. Recent numbers of the *American Political Science Review*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, and the *National Municipal Review* should be available at all times on open or reserve shelves of the library.

In connection with courses in American political parties the reading of well-chosen political novels can be made as stimulating as is the reading of historical novels in connection with history courses. A number of the more significant of such works of fiction are cited in the Book Notes given under various chapters below. For a more complete list, with critical comment, including poems and essays as well as novels, the reader is referred to C. E. Merriam, *American Political Ideas* (1920), Ch. XIV.

More interesting than novels, and of course more useful, are the biographies of political leaders who have participated in recent campaigns, provided they are critical in character. Biographies in party text-books and other works of pure laudation are valuable chiefly as samples of campaign "literature." The author has found the following most helpful in enabling students to grasp the motives that sway men in politics: H. Croly, *Marcus Alonzo Hanna* (1912); Tom L. Johnson, *My Story*

## NATURE OF PARTIES

(1913); Brand Whitlock, *Forty Years of It* (1916); Anna Howard Shaw, *Story of a Pioneer* (1915); T. Roosevelt, *Autobiography* (1913); W. D. Lewis, *The Life of Theodore Roosevelt* (1919); and W. E. Dodd, *Woodrow Wilson and His Work* (1921).

At all times it should be impressed upon students of parties that politics is life, not simply literature. They should be encouraged to attend campaign meetings, conventions, caucuses, conferences of reform and other organizations; to write fact statements followed by comment on the speeches and proceedings at such gatherings; to interview leaders and candidates; and finally to compare and criticize such written statements and the accounts published in local newspapers.

On the specific topic discussed in Ch. I—namely, the nature of political parties—references may be found in the systematic treatises on American political parties listed, and also in the following: G. Bradford, *The Lesson of Popular Government*, Ch. XXI; J. Q. Dealey, *The State and Government* (1921), Ch. XX; R. G. Gettell, *Introduction to Political Science* (1910), Ch. XXI; A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States* (1916), Ch. VII; L. H. Holt, *Introduction to the Study of Government* (1915); S. Leacock, *Elements of Political Science* (1913), Ch. VIII; J. Schouler, *Ideals of the Republic* (1908), Ch. X; J. A. Smith, *The Spirit of American Government* (1907), Ch. VIII; W. F. Willoughby, *Government of Modern States* (1919), Ch. XVII; and W. Wilson, *Constitutional Government in the United States* (1908), Ch. VIII. The most original and thorough discussion of the definition of political parties from the pen of an American writer is to be found in an article by A. D. Morse, "What Is a Party?" in the *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. XI, p. 68 (March, 1896).



## CHAPTER II

### PARTY DESIGNATIONS AND CLASSIFICATION

Popular  
choice of  
party names

THE names chosen by parties to designate themselves are seldom accurately or comprehensively descriptive. Practical politics develops a racy vernacular replete with slang. From this source many party titles of greater or less vogue have been drawn—witness our “Quids,” “Loco-Focos,” “Know-Nothings,” “Hunkers” and “Barnburners,” “Stalwarts” and “Half-Breeds,” “Snappers” and “Anti-Snappers.” As in the case of certain religious sects, nicknames maliciously invented by enemies are sometimes assumed defiantly by parties and afterward borne with pride. Such was the origin of the names of both the Whig and Tory parties in England.

Small  
descriptive  
value of  
party names

Even when the title chosen is a word formerly possessing a serious political meaning, it may nevertheless throw little light on the character of the party assuming it. Of course the task of selecting a name is much easier in the case of parties devoted to a single issue, as, for example, our Greenbackers and Prohibitionists. But no single title can do justice to parties advocating a wide range of policies. Certainly there is little of descriptive value in the terms Republican and Democratic as used in our national politics. The Democrats of to-day are the lineal descendants of those who in Jefferson's time called themselves Republicans. By their Federalist opponents they were dubbed Democrats or Democratic-Republicans, in scorn and derision. At the present time so-called Democratic parties also exist in a number of European countries, but they have no connection whatever with the party bearing the same name in the United States and differ from it

## PARTY DESIGNATIONS

widely both in composition and in purposes. The terms Radical, Liberal, Moderate, Progressive, and Conservative are also much in favor as party names. In their general significance each of these has some value as indicating a certain attitude toward political innovation. As party names, however, they are used very loosely. Parties calling themselves Liberal differ widely from country to country, and the same is true of each of the other terms in the above list. On the other hand, it is true that Socialist parties pursue fairly definite common aims in all countries and have established international connections.

In popular speech a number of terms are used more or less exactly to characterize partisan organizations. Thus a distinction is drawn frequently between a party and a faction. Originally the two words were synonymous; indeed, they are so used occasionally at the present time. In his famous dictionary Doctor Johnson defines "faction" as "a party in the state," and also quotes it without qualification of any sort as an equivalent for the word "party." At that time both terms were in ill repute. With the extension of the activities and the purification of the aims of parties that came in the nineteenth century the latter word gradually lost its offensive significance and became first reputable and finally even creditable. Meanwhile all the evil and opprobrious connotations descended upon "faction," which is currently associated with the ideas of dissension, intrigue, unscrupulousness, self-seeking, recklessness of the common good, and subversive designs upon the government. With more or less animus the word is also employed at times to designate the groups into which a party is divided before or after a split by rivalries between its leaders or by clashes of economic, sectional, or other interests.

Another distinction commonly made is that between the "ins" and the "outs"—that is, between the party or parties supporting the government and those in opposition. Where these rôles are reversed from time to time the distinction may seem to be of slight value. As a matter of

Party and  
faction

"Ins" and  
"outs"

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fact, however, it involves considerable differences both of outlook and of activity. The "ins" are inclined to be optimistic in temper and defensive in tactics, while the "outs" are apt to be pessimistic and aggressive. When political conditions bring about a long retention of power by the government party and the consequent exclusion of the opposition, these psychological and tactical differences become very sharply defined.

"Right,"  
"left" and  
"center"

In the various countries of continental Europe the terms "Right," "Left," and "Center" are frequently employed to designate conservative, radical, and moderate parties, respectively. The usage arose from the practice of assigning parliamentary seats, which are arranged semicircularly in the legislative halls of these countries, so that the conservative representatives were placed to the right of the speaker, the radicals to his left, and the moderates in the center. When party divisions are numerous such terms as "Right Center," "Left Center," "Extreme Right," and "Extreme Left" come into use. In the Reichstag of the former German Empire the center of the floor was assigned to the representatives of the Clerical (Catholic) party, and the word "*Zentrum*" consequently came to be associated with that party.

"Haves" and  
"have nots"

According to another popular saying the struggle between the "haves" and the "have nots" is the basis of all party divisions. In scientific phraseology the followers of Karl Marx have greatly elaborated this idea. They conceive the Socialist party as representative of the proletarian masses, and lump all other parties together, regardless of their widely diverging aims, as more or less frankly representative of the capitalist class.

Constitu-  
tional and  
revolution-  
ary parties

Parties are also frequently classified in the countries of continental Europe as belonging to two groups—first, those which uphold the existing state (*Staatserhaltende parteien*), and, second, those which desire to overthrow it. (*Umsturzparteien*). Thus under the former German Empire the Social-Democrats, and the Polish, Danish, and Alsace-Lorraine parties belonged to the second and all



## PARTY DESIGNATIONS

other parties to the first of these groups. Parties opposed to the existing state order may favor violence more or less openly, or they may confine themselves to strictly legal methods of securing constitutional changes. As the German illustrations cited above show, they may aim either at a fundamental transformation of the existing order such as that from capitalism to socialism or from monarchy to democracy; or they may seek simply to separate themselves from the state in order to enter another, as did the Polish, Danish, and Alsace-Lorraine parties. Parties which favor the maintenance of the existing order are not necessarily members of the coalition or "bloc" temporarily supporting the government. While they accept the constitution as a whole they may favor its amendment in important particulars, always, however, by strictly legal methods.

The word "opportunist" is occasionally used in American politics, nearly always in a bad sense as implying a trimmer or one willing to sacrifice consistency to expediency and principles to policies. It enjoys a better fame in France, for to the efforts on more than one occasion of so-called opportunists the present Republic was saved from overthrow. As a matter of fact an opportunist may be as sincerely devoted to his principles as a member of any other party, all the more so, indeed, because he is unwilling to jeopardize them by hasty and sweeping action. As regards policies, however, he considers it wise and prudent to distinguish between those which are ripe for adoption in their entirety or not subject to compromise, and, on the other hand, those which may be attained gradually, or postponed for the present, or made the basis of compromise with other parties. In this better sense of the word not only our two major parties, but the Socialists as well, may be said to have pursued an opportunist policy on many occasions.

Opportunist  
parties

Directly opposed in beliefs and methods to opportunists are the irreconcilables or intransigents of politics. The latter conceive their program to be of such supreme importance that they reject all compromise and insist upon its

Irreconcil-  
ables or in-  
transigents

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immediate adoption as a whole. Naturally this attitude is frequently made the butt of derision or reproach. It is impossible, however, to doubt the sincerity of irreconcilable parties since membership in them usually requires much greater courage than membership in more tolerant political organizations and offers less prospect of office or reward of any kind. They have sometimes advocated violence, but this is not necessarily the case. Indeed, at times the only course of action open to them has been that of passive resistance. There have been many intransigent parties in European countries, most of them devoted to what seemed hopelessly lost causes. Yet some of them have gained their ends, especially at times of general unsettlement, and contributed to the world's advance thereby. Following the Great War the map of Europe was redrawn and its political systems readjusted largely along lines formerly advocated by various intransigent parties. In the United States the Prohibitionist party has consistently pursued an irreconcilable policy in the better sense of the term.

Macaulay's  
classifica-  
tion of  
parties

In contrast with the more or less popular distinctions noted above, historians and philosophers have often attempted to point out fundamental bases of party division. Thus in discussing the origin of the two great English parties Macaulay wrote:

In one sense, indeed, the distinction which then became obvious had always existed, and always must exist. For it has its origin in diversities of temper, of understanding, and of interest, which are found in all societies, and which will be found till the human mind ceases to be drawn in opposite directions by the charm of habit and the charm of novelty. . . .

Everywhere there is a class of men who cling with fondness to whatever is ancient, and who, even when convinced by overpowering reasons that innovation would be beneficial, consent to it with many misgivings and forebodings. We find also everywhere another class of men sanguine in hope, bold in speculation, always pressing forward, quick to discern the imperfections of whatever exists, disposed to think lightly of the risks and inconveniences which attend improvements, and disposed to give every change

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credit for being an improvement. . . . If in her [England's] institutions, freedom and order, the advantages arising from innovation, and the advantages arising from prescription have been combined to an extent elsewhere unknown, we may attribute this happy peculiarity to the strenuous conflicts and the alternate victories of two rival confederacies of statesmen, a confederacy zealous for authority and antiquity, and a confederacy zealous for liberty and progress.<sup>1</sup>

Interesting as is this bit of theorizing, it manifestly does not begin to do justice to the large variety of political inclinations existing among mankind. In countries with a two-party system one of the two may be presumed to take a more favorable attitude toward innovation than the other. Usually, however, it is difficult to decide this point between them. Both in England and in the United States to-day the two great parties frankly propose innovations, although along somewhat different lines. As regards liberty and authority also party attitudes are not always clearly defined. And respect for antiquity as a basic party principle is much less frequently avowed nowadays than in the times of which Macaulay wrote. Finally in countries with a multi-party system—and they are much more numerous than those on a bi-party basis—the theory breaks down entirely.

Defects of  
Macaulay's  
classification

A more elaborate theory of party divisions was propounded in 1842 by Friedrich Rohmer.<sup>2</sup> According to this writer the natural causes of political parties must be sought in the laws governing the development of the human soul. This development exhibits itself throughout the various stages of life—boyhood, young manhood, mature manhood, and old age—in the succession of which fundamental changes of mind and character occur. Of these four stages the two most important are young man-

Rohmer's  
theory of  
parties

<sup>1</sup> *History of England*, vol. i, ch. i.

<sup>2</sup> The theory was first presented in the *Beobachter aus der östlichen Schweiz*, and later published by Theodor Rohmer, brother of the above, under the title, *Lehre von den politischen Parteien*, Zürich, 1844. See also J. C. Bluntschli, *Character und Geist der politischen Parteien*, pp. 82 *et seq.*

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

hood and mature manhood. During both of these full possession of the active powers of the soul is enjoyed. Young manhood, however, is peculiarly the period of generation and creation. Mature manhood, on the other hand, is the period of orderly arrangement and preservation. To these two types of mind and character correspond respectively Liberalism and Conservatism in politics.

Radicals  
and  
absolutists  
opposed to  
Liberals and  
Conserva-  
tives

As representative of the full development of the manly powers Rohmer assigns the natural leadership in the state to these two parties. Opposed to them, although of less importance, there are two extreme parties, corresponding respectively to the stages of boyhood and of old age. Boyhood is characterized by a susceptible and observant eye, a lively imagination, and a receptive mind, but it lacks perspective and creative power. In politics the counterpart of this period is Radicalism. Old age brings to the forefront the passive and feminine powers of the mind, characterized by irritability of feeling, quickness of combination, and fineness of conception. The Absolutist party in politics presents the same distinctive traits.

Exceptions  
to normal  
develop-  
ment  
according to  
Rohmer

In accordance with this theory it would seem that every individual of normal development should, if he lived long enough, belong successively to the Radical, Liberal, Conservative, and Absolutist parties. To critics who urged this objection it was replied that such, indeed, was the normal tendency of men in the mass. At least the inclination of younger men toward liberalism and of older men toward conservatism has been commented upon by many observers. Owing to differences of individual character, however, the complete fourfold development outlined by Rohmer is arrested in some cases, hastened in others. Certain individuals remain boys in character, and therefore Radical in politics, all their lives. Others are prematurely aged in character and for that reason attach themselves permanently to the Absolutist party in young manhood or even in boyhood. Moreover, actual party lines rarely coincide sharply and clearly with the fourfold

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division required by the theory, although Rohmer's supporters attempted to show that they were potentially present even when not plainly visible. Owing to this blurring over of natural party lines the choice of parties in accordance with types of character is more or less obscured.

Interesting as is Rohmer's theory, it offers numerous openings for attack. Radicals and Absolutists naturally object to the aspersions of juvenility and senility respectively which it casts upon them. Nor will they admit that their parties are of an inferior class as compared with the Liberals and Conservatives, and resign to the latter leadership in the state. Indeed, from the Radical and Absolutist points of view Liberalism and Conservatism are nothing more than weak-kneed imitations of themselves, and therefore quite incapable of meeting adequately great emergencies in the state. Rohmer's account of the mental changes caused by advancing years is far from being either sufficient or convincing; in particular what he says of old age seems fantastic. Whatever part psychological conditions determined by advancing years may play in deciding party affiliations is manifestly outweighed in the case of many individuals by the influence of other factors. Among these the more important are economic position, social standing, education, family traditions, personal loyalty to leaders, race, religion, geographical environment, and historical circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of all the ingenuity expended by the advocates of Rohmer's theory it cannot be shown that there is any

<sup>1</sup> In fairness to Rohmer it should be said that his theory deals only with purely political parties. Bluntschli recognizes various lower or impure grades of parties, that is such as contain other than political elements, namely: (1) religious-political mixed parties; (2) parties resting upon geographical, national, or racial differences; and (3) parties standing for a certain social class—*e.g.*, patricians or plebeians; clergy, nobility, or commonalty. Continuing this classification, he differentiates political parties proper as (4) those which differ on constitutional grounds—*e.g.*, royalists and republicans; aristocrats and democrats; feudal and constitutional; unitary and federalists; nationalists and particularists; centralizing and decentralizing; (5) government and opposition parties; and (6) pure political parties—*e.g.*, liberals, conservatives, etc. Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 16-27.

Criticism of  
Rohmer's  
theory



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No general  
tendency to  
fourfold  
party divi-  
sion

general tendency to revert to a fourfold division of parties. It has existed for some time in Switzerland, and it existed for a time in Germany after 1866. The nearest approach to it in the history of the United States was during the campaign of 1912 between Republicans, Democrats, Progressives, and Socialists. In none of these instances were divisions drawn throughout along the lines indicated by Rohmer. Certainly any tendency there may be to revert to a fourfold-party basis is less strong than the two-party tendency in England and the United States. In most of the countries of continental Europe there are more than four well-defined parties, and the tendency is toward further cleavage.

Value of  
terms used  
by Rohmer

However inadequate Rohmer's attempted classification of parties may be, the terms which he employs therein enjoy a wide although somewhat uncertain vogue as descriptive of party purposes. Of course their meaning in any given case depends largely upon the political system to which they are applied. Thus a party described as radical under a monarchical government might pursue the same ends as a party described as conservative under a republican government. Like so many other words in the lexicon of politics, most of these have been used as terms of ridicule or reproach. In spite of the difficulties it may be worth while to attempt to develop their meaning as generally accepted at the present time.

Conserva-  
tism

A conservative party may be defined as one which stands upon the principle of stability. Believing in the soundness of the existing order, its efforts are directed to the maintenance of the *status quo* and in opposition to innovation which it considers dangerous to the state.<sup>1</sup> To use an illuminative American phrase, conservatism "stands pat." In an extreme or unfavorable sense conservatism is held to be opposed to all progress.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the above type, which he calls the "positive conservative," A. Christensen distinguishes the "negative conservative," who "also does not want any alteration, but only in view of the fact that, while things are altogether in a bad way, yet that no improvement is possible." Cf. his *Politics and Crowd Morality*, p. 5.

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Liberal parties are based upon the principle of progress. They accept the existing order to a greater or less degree, but advocate reforms which they consider necessary to lift it to a higher plane of justice or efficiency. **Liberalism**

Starting from the conviction that the existing order is fundamentally wrong, radicalism proposes first to destroy everything of an obstructionist character and then to rebuild in accordance with its own program. There is no more exquisite formulation of this attitude than Omar's. **Radicalism**

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire  
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then  
Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

The term "Absolutist," which is the fourth in Rohmer's classification, defines itself. Unlike the other three, it is so specific in meaning that it scarcely seems to belong in the series. Doubtless for this reason the more general term "Reaction" has been suggested in its place.<sup>1</sup> Just as radicalism goes to the left of liberalism, so reaction goes to the right of conservatism. At any given time and place conservatism represents a fixed point in the political scheme—the defense of things as they are. In common with both liberalism and radicalism, reaction stands in opposition to the existing order. But while the former two desire to advance with greater or less speed, reaction finds its ideal in the past and works for a reversal of existing tendencies or conditions. The various French parties which under the present Republic have advocated a return to one or the other kinds of monarchy formerly prevailing in that country are, therefore, typical reactionary parties. In our own politics return to a former condition has sometimes been suggested as a solution for a given problem. Thus there are those who believe some earlier tariff level to have been ideal, or who advocate a return

**Absolutism and reaction**

<sup>1</sup> A. L. Lowell, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 9. Bluntschli recognizes that "political absolutism in our [nineteenth] century is ordinarily reactionary." *Op. cit.*, p. 153.

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to competition as opposed to the recognition of trusts and monopolies, or would give up direct primaries and return to the old convention system. But none of our parties has ever frankly accepted reaction in general as its central principle.

Parties  
classified ac-  
cording to  
ends, not  
forms

States and governments are usually classified according to the forms of organization which they exhibit. Attempts to classify parties, on the other hand, are nearly always based on the character of the ends which they pursue. The public is naturally more interested in the propaganda of parties than in the organization which originates it, so much so, indeed, that only recently has the extent and influence of the latter begun to be evaluated critically. And most of the nomenclature of parties is drawn from popular sources. A further reason for the different bases of classification may be found in the fact that while states and governments pursue much the same general aims they show great variations in organization, making it easier to classify them on the latter basis. Parties, on the other hand, differ from each other much more widely in the ends they pursue than in the structures they develop—hence apparently the tendency to classify them on the former basis.

Michels'  
theory

The essential similarity of party structures the world over has been made the starting point of an extremely interesting and comprehensive study by Professor Robert Michels of the University of Basel.<sup>1</sup> Under democratic conditions, according to this writer, an "iron law" of sociology brings about the formation of an oligarchy in every political party regardless of the nature of the doctrines it professes. This tendency to oligarchy is based, first, on individual psychology; second, on the psychology of the crowd; and, third, on the social necessities of party organization. Under the first of these Professor Michels includes the individual's consciousness of his own importance which with opportunity develops into a natural human lust for power, and also such other individual

<sup>1</sup> R. Michels, *Political Parties*, translated by E. and C. Paul.



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qualities, original or acquired, as native tact, oratorical gifts, editorial skill, special intelligence, and so on. Persons who possess these qualities push forward rapidly to places of power in political organizations. As factors of crowd psychology favoring oligarchy Michels notes the incompetence of men in masses, their dependence upon traditional methods of party government, and their admiration for leaders, particularly for such as may have suffered for the cause. Finally, various social necessities contribute to the same end. One of these is the physical impossibility of direct self-government in large party groups; another the constant state of contention in which parties engage with other parties and, if they are revolutionary in character, with the existing order itself, making strong power in the hands of a few leaders a condition of success or even of survival.

In the beginning of a party's life, according to Professor Michels, leadership may be weak, diffuse, and voluntary. But as membership increases, the pressure of the factors noted above places larger and larger powers in the hands of a small number of men. Often the latter become permanent holders of all controlling party offices and develop special interests of their own—in other words, an oligarchy is virtually established. Such leadership is certainly experienced and may be efficient, well informed, almost professional in its qualifications and methods, but it is also likely to become cautious, conservative, intent above all else to preserve its personal power undiminished, and, if possible, to increase it. All party struggles, therefore, resolve themselves into struggles between the oligarchy of the party in control of the state and the equally narrow oligarchies of the parties striving to dispossess the former. Sometimes by a sweeping victory or by revolution the latter get rid of all the former dominating oligarchs at once, which means simply that a new oligarchy has taken complete possession of the state. Or the oligarchy of an emerging party may compel the oligarchy of the dominant group to cede it a small number

**Party  
oligarchies**

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of ministerial posts, and, if its power continues to increase, may acquire ultimately a majority of such offices, and hence a controlling influence over the government. Under any of these contingencies, however, the government, regardless of its apparent form, is actually an oligarchy, and all parties, no matter how democratic or even socialistic their professed principles, are likewise under the control of oligarchies. As a mere exercise in logic it is, of course, an easy matter to maintain the proposition that all forms of government are oligarchic. But this does not wipe out the real distinctions that exist among them as to the number exercising political power, the manner in which public authorities are constituted, the various ways in which they exercise their functions, and so on. In a similar way the sweeping proposition that all parties are oligarchic may be used to obscure the actual differences that exist among them.

Party  
oligarchy in  
the United  
States

There can be no doubt that the tendency to centralize party control, which Professor Michels points out, is both powerful and widely felt. In no country, perhaps, has it made itself more manifest than in the United States. Indeed, with us it often exceeds the limits of oligarchy, with the result that we find ourselves confronted with that species of party dictatorship known as bossism. But bossism and party oligarchy are always under fire from the moment of their first appearance. The chief weakness of the Michels theory is its failure to take into account the fact that centralization of party power breeds its opposite. Thus in the United States machines and bosses have found themselves faced by various forms of counter organizations—independent and third-party movements and factions within the organization itself.<sup>1</sup> It must be admitted that they make a stout resistance and have shown a power of recuperation under defeat that has proved disheartening to many of their opponents. The fight is by no means ended, however, and there is good reason to believe that as a result of our awakened citizenship and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. E. Merriam, *American Party System*, p. 80; also this book, ch. ix.

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various reforms already adopted or under discussion, such as the merit system, direct primaries, the short ballot, corrupt practices acts, and the application of the initiative, referendum and recall to party management, a satisfactory degree of democracy may be attained in the affairs of political parties. Nor is undue pessimism justified by an historical view. Oligarchic control was more marked, more unscrupulous, and harder to dislodge in eighteenth century English parties than it has been at any subsequent time either in England, the United States, or the more liberal countries of continental Europe.

No doubt small coteries of powerful leaders have sought and still seek to advance their own interests as far as possible through the manipulation of party machinery. But this does not mean that they can neglect and override at will the interests of their own followers or of the wider public. Frequently, indeed, it is only by advancing these interests that they can succeed in their more personal aims. The great contributions made by parties to liberalism, to constitutional reform, and to a more democratic suffrage during the nineteenth century would of themselves seem sufficient to justify this view. If oligarchic party leaders proved themselves incurably selfish, free peoples would speedily find other means to give expression to their will. That they have not done so, that, on the contrary, parties have grown constantly in numbers and power to the present day, is convincing evidence that on the whole they have been found acceptable instruments of popular rule.

Opposition  
to party  
oligarchies

## BOOK NOTES

ON party designations and classification the work of T. Rohmer, *Lehre von den politischen Parteien* (1844), is fundamental. Supplementary to this, J. K. Bluntschli, *Character und Geist der politischen Parteien* may also be consulted. \* A. L. Lowell, *Public Opinion in War and Peace* (1923), presents a penetrating analysis of radicals, liberals, conservatives, and reactionaries. The brilliant

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work of R. Michels has been translated under the title of *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracies* (1915). In this connection the student should also consult C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System* (1922), especially the discussions of party leadership in Chs. II and III. Other references of value may be found as follows: J. de Boisjolin, *Les Partis en France* (1906); A. Christensen, *Politics and Crowd Morality* (1915), Ch. I; G. L. Dickinson, *A Modern Symposium* (1905); M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties* (1902), Vol. I, Part II, Chs. I and II; G. Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics* (1909), Ch. II; and J. A. Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems in the United States* (1903), Ch. I.

## CHAPTER III

### CONDITIONS OF PARTY LIFE

CONSIDERING the history of the world as a whole, political parties are an extremely late development. Nor are they by any means universal at the present time. Countless generations of mankind have existed without organizations that could properly be called political parties. To millions of human beings living in Asia and Africa they are equally unknown at the present time. When we contrast this condition of affairs with the prominence and importance of political parties in other countries the question naturally arises, What conditions favorable to party life, on the one hand, and unfavorable on the other, can account for such wide extremes?

Parties a late development historically

It is customary to refer the existence of parties to human nature itself. To explain their absence on the same basis would be nearer the truth. A reconciliation of these apparent contradictions may be found in the statement that in primitive and undeveloped states of society conditions unfavorable to party life are dominant. Not until societies are highly evolved do contrary conditions become powerful enough to lead to the formation of parties.

No parties in primitive societies

With few if any exceptions political parties advocate changes of greater or less extent.<sup>1</sup> But to undeveloped

<sup>1</sup> So-called conservative parties seldom plant themselves absolutely on the *status quo*. Originally they made much more of the principle of antiquity than is customary at the present time. To the extent that they were true to this principle they were in fact reactionary. No doubt the modern parties of this tendency are lineal descendants of the earlier overwhelmingly conservative sentiment of mankind, a fact which goes far to explain their tenacity and power. The first organization of this sentiment in the form of parties was an innovation in that it involved the creation of new machinery and the employment of new methods, but it



Early con-  
servatism

racess innovation is anathema. "The primitive man," wrote Herbert Spencer, "is conservative in an extreme degree. Even on contrasting higher races with one another, and even on contrasting different classes in the same society, it is observable that the least developed are the most averse to change."<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Maine put the case even more strongly: "Much the greatest part of mankind has never shown a particle of desire that its civil institutions should be improved since the moment when external completeness was first given to them by embodiment in some permanent record. . . . To the fact that the enthusiasm for change is comparatively rare must be added the fact that it is extremely modern. It is known but to a small part of mankind, and to that part but for a short period during a history of incalculable length."<sup>2</sup>

Political  
apathy

Closely associated with this hostility to change there is an appalling degree of apathy on the part of undeveloped races toward all matters political. Their whole stock of energy may be absorbed in a struggle for bare existence, as among the Eskimos. In more favored climes which make possible some degree of leisure the genius of the race may be fully occupied by religion or other nonpolitical interests. The charge of apathy is sometimes brought against highly civilized peoples as well. Writing of the United States in 1913, Mr. Walter Lippmann remarks that, "The most incisive comment on politics to-day is indifference."<sup>3</sup> Reformers and practical politicians alike constantly echo this complaint. Indeed, the activities of

was also a reaction in that it involved opposition to the parties of a liberal or radical tendency. Parties of the two latter tendencies rest upon a more recent and more highly evolved complex than conservative parties. But it is doubtful if any existing parties calling themselves conservative are absolutely so. They may glorify the principles of authority, order and stability, and oppose bitterly the innovations advocated by other parties, but upon examination they will be found to favor changes in their own interest, sometimes reactionary, at other times even progressive in character. Virtually all existing parties, therefore, are parties of change in some degree.

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ancient Law*, 3d Am. ed., pp. 21-22.

<sup>3</sup> *Preface to Politics*, p. 1.

## CONDITIONS OF PARTY LIFE

parties are directed in large measure to the awakening of interest and enthusiasm. But the indifference of civilized man cannot be compared to the apathy of undeveloped peoples. The former is quickly changed to partisanship by great events or eloquent appeals; the latter continues unbroken generation after generation.

Such organization as primitive peoples possess is homogeneous to an extreme degree. Their social structure shows few differentiations; their economic activities are largely confined to some one field such as hunting and fishing, pastoral pursuits, or agriculture. The dull uniformity of their consequent outlook upon life reflects itself in the all but universal conservatism or apathy of their political attitude. Among peoples with highly developed social and industrial systems, on the other hand, there are numerous stark contrasts and divergent group interests. From the latter spring differences of opinion and the determination to maintain them, which, given an opportunity, crystallize in the form of political parties.

**Divergent  
group  
interests in  
higher  
societies**

Accustomed as we have become to the view that political parties are helpful or even essential to the conduct of government, it is nevertheless true that for centuries all the power of the latter was so exercised as to make the existence of parties impossible. Primitive governments resting upon military force looked with extreme intolerance upon political discussion of any sort. To the material means of repression they usually added the influence of a subservient priesthood which taught the divine origin of the state and sometimes even asserted the actual divinity of the reigning monarch or dominant caste. Under such conditions the faintest manifestation of political interest or activity on the part of the subject masses was dealt with as constituting not only rebellion, but sacrilege as well.

**Early gov-  
ernments  
intolerant  
of parties**

By conquest theocratic military governments often extended their sway over peoples of alien blood, language, customs, and religion. Within these enlarged territories differences due to unlike geographical and economic en-

**Effects of  
conquest**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

vironments made themselves manifest. The homogeneity of primitive peoples with their restricted outlook and consequent conservatism thus gave way to a complexity of social conditions from which one might naturally expect political differences and activity to emerge. But the processes of conquest involve a further centralization of political authority and an increase in the power of government. As a result any attempt at political activity on the part of subject peoples is repressed quite as sternly and more effectually than before. Under such conditions parties in the modern sense of the word cannot exist. The nearest approach to them will be found in the cabals and juntas of self-seeking courtiers surrounding the monarch and in secret societies plotting his assassination or fomenting rebellion.

England's  
favored  
position

Struggles of this sort may go on for centuries without opening the way to liberalism or a wider diffusion of political power. Especially is this true of countries exposed to foreign invasion where political repression may justify itself as necessary to national self-preservation. In England the protection afforded by the North Sea and the Channel enabled nobility, gentry, and municipal corporations to make good their claims against the crown at a much earlier date than in continental Europe. Even so, political power long remained in the hands of a small fraction of the population. The parties which first made their appearance in these favored social classes were largely dominated by narrow group interests, sometimes even by great families. Long after the crown had lost its power to repress political activity directly it was able by playing party against party, by patronage, and by corruption to achieve its own ends.

Progress of  
liberalism  
and  
democracy

Beginning with the last quarter of the eighteenth century liberal and democratic ideas of government made great progress in America and western Europe. Social classes formerly without political power acquired economic importance and were admitted to the suffrage. Elective officers increased in number, religious or prop-



## CONDITIONS OF PARTY LIFE

erty qualifications were lowered or abolished. Popular education, the press, and improved means of communication greatly stimulated interest in public questions. Party organizations were enormously expanded to meet the new demands made upon them. Even if narrow class interests still find expression through them it must be admitted that the number of classes which thus find expression is larger than ever before.

With the abandonment of *laissez-faire* theories, governments have assumed new functions in many fields of public service which bring them into constant contact with the daily lives of their citizens. The result is a great increase of political interest and the emergence of new issues with which parties concern themselves. On the other hand, the executive branches of the more progressive governments of the world have abandoned all the grosser and many of the minor forms of repression and corruption with which they formerly attempted to stay the advance of political parties. To varying degrees they admit the right of political parties acting through constitutional forms to influence and even to control the conduct of public affairs.

Extension  
of govern-  
ment func-  
tions

Favored by these developments, political parties have come to play an essential part in the public life of the most highly developed countries of the world. They are the natural outgrowth of liberalism, democracy, and education, of economic and social progress. In other countries they are weak to the extent that these favoring conditions are lacking, and, as we have seen, they are unknown among primitive and undeveloped peoples. Wherever despotism, military power, theocracy, repression hold sway, wherever the social structure is homogeneous, wherever the people are sunk in apathy and hide-bound conservatism, parties cannot exist. Whatever the abuses of contemporary party life, it is impossible to see nothing but coincidences in such contrasts. And it is certainly much more than a coincidence that in the World War victory rested in the end with those powers which possessed the most highly organized

Parties and  
social  
progress

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

and influential party life together with the whole range of political, industrial, and social structures to which it is a necessary complement.

Eighteenth  
century  
view of  
parties

Under the favoring conditions of the nineteenth century parties made great advances not only in organization and material power, but in moral standards and methods as well. With few exceptions the philosophers and statesmen of the preceding century were agreed in their condemnation of party. Monarchy was the prevailing form of government of the stronger nations of that time. To its adherents the "pestilential influence of party animosities"<sup>1</sup> meant dissension, corruption, disorder and revolution. The long record of kings sadly limited in the exercise of their prerogatives by factions, of kings deposed and martyred by factions, of kings struggling by means of bribery and influence to make headway against factions, was more than sufficient to convince all believers in the royalist régime that nothing good could ever flow from such an accursed and polluted source.

Views  
of states-  
men and  
philoso-  
phers

What is more difficult to understand is the extent to which progressive and even radical statesmen and philosophers coincided with this view. Believing as they all did to a greater or less degree in the right of the people to participate in government they were extremely vague as to just how this popular power should be applied. Almost without exception, however, they feared its application by means of parties. "The eighteenth-century Whig idea of government . . . regards parties as barnacles upon the ship of state or cancers in the body politic. Before 1787 no English political writer of any consequence except Edmund Burke had dared to defend the party system, and his arguments were regarded as disingenuous attempts to gloss over the iniquities of cabals and cliques."<sup>2</sup>

Rousseau  
on parties

Extreme radical as he was, Rousseau nevertheless feared parties as destructive to that "general will" without which his ideal democracy could not exist. To the great

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. B. Munro, *Government of the United States*, p. 312.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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French philosopher Montesquieu factions appeared to be characterized by unrestrained passions—"hatred, envy, jealousy, and an ambitious desire of riches and honors." Nevertheless, he was inclined to believe that among a free people, such as the English, their existence was an evidence of strength and, further, that a tendency to a balance of power between them could be discerned. Prior to the appearance of Burke's pamphlet this was the most favorable judgment that had been expressed regarding parties.

For this unanimity on one point of Whigs and Tories, of democrats and monarchists, an underlying reason may be discerned. All of them were so thoroughly convinced of the depravity of political parties that they desired most heartily to steer clear of them. Absolutists feared—with entire correctness, as the event showed—that parties would destroy their system. Moderates like the Whigs, together with democrats and other radicals, were convinced that, once they had succeeded in bringing about reforms or in establishing ideal conditions, parties would immediately set about their subversion. Thus from one end of the political scale to the other there was essential agreement in the belief that parties were incorrigibly violent, destructive, oppressive, and corrupt.

Alleged  
depravity  
of parties

In the light of all that had happened down to that time a very strong argument could be made out in support of the conviction that factions were by nature violent. The controversies of centuries had shown that force was the *ultima ratio regis*. If factions had always pursued a pacifist policy when pushed to extremities by the royal power, absolutism would have survived and neither democracies nor parties would have come into existence. From this point of view much of the earlier violence of faction is seen to be thoroughly justified. On the other hand one can readily understand the aversion to violence and consequently, as they thought, to factions on the part of those who had to reckon with it as a constantly recurring condition in their own lives and affairs.

Violence  
of parties

Apart from their growth in numbers, perhaps the most

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Parties  
adopt  
peaceful  
methods

remarkable development of parties during the nineteenth century was the increasingly pacific character of their activities. For this sharp contrast between contemporary parties and those of earlier periods a number of explanations may be assigned. Religious controversies which embittered the politics of the eighteenth and preceding centuries no longer played so great a part. The temper of civilized mankind has grown more pacific, although in the light of what happened from 1914 to 1918 one hesitates to lay much stress on this factor. Certain it is that most of the leaders and a large part of the followers of the few politically active classes of earlier times were trained in the use of arms and ready to resort to them on slight provocation. When actual conflict did occur among them, as for example in the War of the Roses, it involved only a part of the population. Modern parties, on the other hand, enroll great masses of the people with a preponderant civilian element. If civil war should break out between them it would involve bloodshed and destruction on a scale unknown to earlier centuries. Finally the wider diffusion of property and education makes for social peace. A controversy such as that over the Hayes-Tilden election of 1876 would have produced civil war almost infallibly in any earlier century.

"Ballots  
instead  
of bullets"

Whatever weight may be assigned to these general considerations accounting for the peaceful character of contemporary political struggles a more specific reason may be found in the fact that parties no longer have to resort to violence in order to gain their ends. In the more advanced nations of the world monarchy has either been abolished or brought under control to such an extent that threats of force are no longer feared from that quarter. Parties have so far advanced their powers and stabilized their position that they have become a part of the existing order and, therefore, interested in its maintenance. Fairly exact and generally accepted methods of determining the extent of the influence to which each party is entitled have been devised in the form of election laws, parliamentary

## CONDITIONS OF PARTY LIFE

procedure, ministerial responsibility, and the like. The somewhat hackneyed phrase, "ballots instead of bullets," really expresses a profound truth regarding the conduct of contemporary political parties as contrasted with the conduct of factions in earlier centuries. Critics continue to assail them on many grounds, but violence is no longer listed in the indictment.

The eighteenth-century view that political parties were by nature destructive has also given way to the general acceptance of their constructive ability. Their achievements in molding the constitutions and determining the course of ordinary legislation in the United States, England, and the more advanced nations of continental Europe leave no room for doubt on this score. During the same time, as we have already noted, they have developed elaborate and efficient organizations to carry on their own activities, both external and internal.

**Constructive work of parties**

Even when conditions rendered it impossible for factions to play a violent and destructive part eighteenth-century thinkers were convinced that they would become agents of oppression. No matter what its nature—nobility, clergy, or commonalty; landed, commercial, or manufacturing interest—the class in power at any given time was certain to exploit to the limit of its ability all other classes in the state. It would seek to arrogate to itself privileges and offices; it would shift to others duties, taxes, and obligations. Essentially the same view is held with regard to the capitalist class by Socialists at the present time. As the only means of avoiding such exploitation eighteenth-century liberals pinned their faith to schemes for checking and balancing governmental powers. They did not foresee that party development under free and democratic conditions would itself supply a simpler and far more efficient principle of moderation.

**Parties viewed as agents of oppression**

To gain power modern political leaders must build up the largest possible following. Their support may rest primarily upon a certain class or classes, but they are obliged to seek votes wherever they may be found. As a

**Factors compelling party moderation**



consequence they are under strong and constant pressure to modify policies put forward by the more extreme wings of their parties, and to conciliate the good will of other classes and groups. "It may be stated as a fact, which acquaintance with the interior workings of politics will verify, that the influence of party leaders is chiefly exerted in soothing the prejudices and moderating the demands of their followers."<sup>1</sup> Anything savoring of oppression is particularly dangerous. It is certain to intensify the opposition of the class aimed at and likely to alienate the more moderate element of the party attempting it. These factors compelling moderation act with maximum intensity under the two-party system, but they are by no means lacking in power where the number of parties is greater. As a result of their action the old charge against parties to the effect that they were by nature oppressive has given way to the modern criticism that they are unduly tolerant, cautious, and procrastinating—not to say cowardly.

Corruption  
of parties

With regard to the eighteenth-century view that political factions were inevitably corrupt a more balanced judgment must be rendered. The charge of corruption still persists with great force in the political life of the most advanced nations. In none of them, however, is anything tolerated similar to the open and cynical bribery of Walpole's day. At that time the crown itself—the "fountain of honor"—was the chief practitioner and beneficiary of the corrupt system. Contemporary executives are not completely deprived of shady means of influencing party action, but such means are few and weak indeed compared with those employed in earlier centuries. Modern forms of corruption proceed very largely from powerful interests outside the government operating in the main through the leaders of the party organization. However much involved the latter may be, they invariably disavow and denounce such connections. Parties could afford to be cynical on this score when political power was confined to the few, virtually all of whom could share in ill-gotten

<sup>1</sup> H. J. Ford, *Rise and Growth of American Politics*, p. 128.



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gains. They cannot afford to be cynical with the wider electorates of the present day. Popular education, the press, freedom of thought and speech, have all contributed to drive corruption underground and make it more difficult. On the whole there is reason to believe that the danger from this source is much less under the present party system than during the eighteenth and preceding centuries. Certainly it is much less in advanced countries with a well-developed party life than in backward absolutist countries where such a development is impossible.

There was a sound historical basis for the eighteenth-century view that factions were violent and destructive in their worse phases, oppressive and corrupt at best. Under the liberal and democratic conditions of the nineteenth century parties have sloughed off all the extreme and many of the minor forms of corruption current during earlier régimes. They have abandoned violence for peaceful processes, they have substituted constructive for destructive activities, they pursue conciliation instead of oppression. The same century that witnessed an enormous increase in their size, organization, and material power witnessed a striking if not equally great elevation of their purposes, methods, and moral standing.

Conclusion

## BOOK NOTES

IN addition to the works of sociologists and political scientists cited in footnotes, among which *Ancient Law* (1861), and *Popular Government* (1885), by Sir Henry Maine, are particularly valuable, the reader should consult \* H. J. Ford, *The Rise and Growth of American Politics* (1898), especially Ch. XXV on "Party Efficiency," also Chs. XXVI to XXVIII, inclusive, which will be found replete with philosophical observations, not only on American party life, but also on the earlier party life of England from which it was derived. In his extended introduction to M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties* (1902), in *The American Common-*

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*wealth* (rev. ed., 1910), especially Parts III, "The Party System," IV, "Public Opinion," and V, "Illustrations and Reflections," and finally in *Modern Democracies* (1921), particularly Part I, "Considerations Applicable to Democratic Government in General," the late Lord Bryce has given expression to his profound historical study and to his wide and prolonged observation of political parties in all the greater democracies of the world. The introduction to J. Macy, *Party Organization and Machinery* (1904), and his *English Constitution* (1903), especially Ch. XXXII, on "The Composition of Political Parties," and Ch. XLII, on "Political Parties Previous to 1832" of the latter, may be consulted with profit.

Among more recent works the following are of special value as contributions to the conditions of party life: W. Lippman, *A Preface to Politics* (1913), particularly Chs. I, IV, VII and VIII, also his *Public Opinion* (1922); A. L. Lowell, *Public Opinion and Popular Government* (1914), Part II of which is devoted to "The Function of Parties," and by the same author, *Public Opinion in War and Peace* (1923), Ch. IV on "Political Parties"; and C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System* (1922), Chs. I, II, XII to XIV, inclusive. Three valuable studies from periodical literature are A. D. Morse, "The Place of Party in the Political System," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol. II, p. 300 (Nov., 1891); A. D. McLaughlin, "The Significance of Political Parties," *Atlantic Monthly* Vol. CI, p. 145 (Feb., 1908); and A. M. Low, "Parties and National Welfare," *North American Review* Vol. CCV, p. 734 (May, 1917).

*PART II*

DEVELOPMENT OF PARTIES IN THE  
UNITED STATES



## CHAPTER IV

### DEVELOPMENT OF PARTIES IN THE UNITED STATES PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR

THE political life of the American Colonies was a reflection on a small scale, colored by frontier conditions, of that of the mother country. "In every Colony," according to John Adams, "divisions have always prevailed. In New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and all the rest, a court and country party has always contended. Whig and Tory disputed sharply before the Revolution and in every step during the Revolution."<sup>1</sup> In the frequent conflicts that occurred between royal governors and Colonial assemblies the Tories supported the former and the Whigs the latter. Little if any trace was left by the issues of that era upon our subsequent life as a nation. But the origins of certain of our political methods and structures are to be found in the Colonial period. Among these may be mentioned the caucus, the use of the ballot, and the custom of requiring that representatives shall be residents of the districts from which they are elected. Colonial committees of correspondence "are the lineal predecessors of our state central committees."<sup>2</sup>

Political life  
of the  
Colonies

As loyalists the Tories opposed the Revolution, many of them fighting on the British side. It is estimated that they made up one third of the population of the colonies. Prominent among the Loyalists were the royal office-holding class, a large proportion of the great landed proprietors, and men of wealth, rank, and education generally. The Whigs, who as supporters of the Revolution were

Loyalist  
Tories *vs.*  
Patriot  
Whigs

<sup>1</sup> Adams, *Works*, vol. x, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> H. J. Ford, *Rise and Growth of American Politics*, p. 8.

called Patriots, drew their strength principally from the ranks of the small home owners, farmers, and shopkeepers. At the close of the war large bodies of the Loyalists, including many of their ablest leaders, emigrated to Canada. Judging from the oligarchic rôle they played for a long time in the affairs of the British American Provinces,<sup>1</sup> it is evident that if they had remained in the United States our earlier party history might have taken a rather more reactionary turn. The Loyalists who remained accepted the result of the Revolution. For the time being party divisions ceased to exist. All the people were Whigs and republican in sentiment.

**Eighteenth-century antagonism to parties shared by the Fathers**

The fathers of the American Constitution shared to the full the eighteenth-century antagonism to political parties. It would be difficult to find a more cogent and complete statement in brief compass of the case against them than that presented by Washington in his Farewell Address. "Let me warn you in the most solemn manner," he begins, "against the baneful effects of the spirit of party, generally." Speaking in the Constitutional Convention on "the amazing violence, and turbulence of the democratic spirit," Hamilton said that "when a great object of government is pursued, which seizes the popular passions, they spread like wildfire and become irresistible."<sup>2</sup> Widely as he differed from Hamilton's general political views, Madison agreed with him that "in all cases where a majority are united by a common interest or passion, the rights of the minority are in danger."<sup>3</sup> In general the members of the convention were shocked by the many historical excesses of popular parties, and the constitution which they framed represents a conservative restoration.

**Small states vs. large states in the convention**

Regardless of this hearty aversion to parties two opposing political groups soon made their appearance on the floor of the convention itself. The small-state group

<sup>1</sup> E. Porritt, *Evolution of the Dominion of Canada*, pp. 62, 72, 84.

<sup>2</sup> Madison, *Journal*, edited by E. H. Scott, June 18, 1787, p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, June 6, 1787, p. 119.



## PARTIES PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR

avored a purely confederate government; the large-state group favored a national government. "The fundamental difference was whether political powers should be drawn from the states as such, or from the people directly."<sup>1</sup> As finally drafted the Constitution represented a compromise between these two views, but one which, on the whole, was more satisfactory to the large-state than to the small-state group. Accordingly, the former favored the acceptance of the federal Constitution and took the name of Federalists. Those who opposed its adoption were called Anti-Federalists. Not until it was agreed that certain amendments should be added—the so-called "bill of rights" of the Constitution—was the opposition of the latter group overcome. With the adoption of the Constitution plus these amendments the issue between the two groups was settled.

### I. FEDERALISTS *versus* DEMOCRATIC-REPUBLICANS

1792-1824

Hamilton  
*vs.* Jefferson

Washington was elected President without opposition and called into his Cabinet both Hamilton and Jefferson. Between leaders of such divergent views and personality conflict was certain to arise. Hamilton's followers formed the Federalist party which sustained the principle of authority, or, expressed in constitutional form, the principle of broad construction. The followers of Jefferson formed the Republican party, which was sometimes derisively called by its enemies the Democratic-Republican, or simply the Democratic party. They were attached to the principle of liberty, which from the constitutional point of view meant strict construction. The difference which thus arose between our two first national parties, and which has been more or less apparent as a "continuing basis of division" ever since, rested upon the opposition of those who are "the advocates of power for the defense of order, the preservation of the rights of property, and

<sup>1</sup> Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems*, p. 10.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

the promotion of enterprises; and those, on the other hand, who are devotees of liberty in resistance to tyranny and governmental interference."<sup>1</sup>

Federalist  
and  
Republican  
policies

In accordance with their fundamental principles the Federalists advocated such policies as Hamilton's funding scheme, assumption of state debts, the first United States Bank, the excise, and a mildly protective tariff—all of which were intended to increase the prosperity of the country and the power and financial influence of the national government. The Republicans opposed these policies on the grounds that they were unsound and speculative, that they exceeded the grants of the Constitution, and that they conferred such great powers upon the federal government as to make it a menace to the rights of the states and to the liberties of the people. In foreign affairs the sympathies of the Republicans were with revolutionary France, those of the Federalists with conservative England. With the outbreak of war between these powers in 1793, party lines were more sharply drawn and partisan bitterness speedily reached dimensions threatening to the stability of the infant republic.

Following  
of the two  
parties

Hamilton's policies made their strongest appeal to bankers, shippers, and merchants. The main strength of the Federalist party was in New England; that of the Republican party in the South. Jefferson's following included, however, not only the planters of the latter region, but also many small farmers and tradesmen of the Northern and Middle States. It must be remembered that suffrage was much restricted at this time by property and other qualifications prevailing under the first state constitutions. Roughly speaking, one fourth of the male adults in the North and one half in the South were excluded from voting.

Washington  
and Adams

By temperament as well as by conviction Washington was not a party man. However, during his two terms in the Presidency he inclined more and more to the policies of Hamilton, so that the first eight years of our national

<sup>1</sup> Woodburn, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

## PARTIES PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR

life may fairly be credited to the Federalist party. At the close of Washington's administration the Federalists succeeded in electing John Adams by a narrow majority over Thomas Jefferson. Four years later Jefferson defeated Adams. At the same time the Federalists lost control of both houses of Congress, never again to regain it. Thereafter the fortunes of the party went steadily downhill, and in the election of 1820 it made no nomination for the Presidency.

The defeat of Adams in 1800 may be ascribed largely to his personal unpopularity, to the open strife which had broken out between himself and Hamilton, and to the blazing indignation caused by prosecutions under the Sedition Act. But the subsequent decline and ultimate disappearance of his party must be explained on broader grounds. It must be admitted that during their twelve years of domination the Federalists had governed strongly and well. The general development of public sentiment was, however, sharply antagonistic to the principle of authority which they represented. Jeffersonian Republicanism, which sustained the principle of liberty, anticipated this development and was firmly seated in power by the rising tide of democratic feeling.

Finally the policies pursued by Jefferson and his successors speedily set at rest the fear that Republican success meant weakness, disintegration, and anarchy. Indeed, the action in regard to the purchase of Louisiana, the Embargo, the protective tariff, and the second bank of the United States, are much more easily reconcilable with the Federalist principle of broad construction than with the Jeffersonian principle of strict construction. While the Democratic-Republicans thus proved themselves capable of pursuing a strong constructive national policy, the Federalists, now reduced to the position of an opposition party, also departed from the purity of their earlier principles. They did not hesitate to attack the vigorous policies of the Democratic-Republicans as exceeding the powers granted by the Constitution, using for this purpose

**Downfall of  
the Federal-  
ist party**

**Jefferson  
and his  
successors**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

arguments originally made by Jefferson. Federalist opposition to the War of 1812 reached a point little short of disloyalty, with the result that the popularity of the party still further declined. The report of the Federalist Hartford Convention, published in 1815, was fully as states' rights and secessionist in tone as the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions, inspired by Madison and Jefferson, respectively, in 1798.

"Era of  
good feel-  
ing"

With the disappearance of the Federalist party there began the so-called "era of good feeling." But the "era of good feeling" soon became in reality a "period of personal politics." At the end of Monroe's second term four powerful leaders—J. Q. Adams, Clay, Crawford, and Jackson—all of whom called themselves Republicans—contested for the Presidency. It is not true, however, that the groups following these leaders were inspired solely by personal loyalty. On the contrary, each of them offered a somewhat different interpretation of Jeffersonian principles. In the ensuing election, while Jackson had a large plurality of the popular vote, none of the candidates received a majority in the electoral college and the election was thrown into the House of Representatives.<sup>1</sup> In the House, John Quincy Adams was chosen by the vote of thirteen states, Jackson receiving the vote of seven, and Crawford of four states.

### II. DEMOCRATS *versus* WHIGS, 1828-1860

Election of  
Jackson,  
1828

Four years later a campaign of much greater personal bitterness was waged. Jackson's friends had not hesitated to charge that his defeat in 1824 was due to a "corrupt bargain" between Adams and Clay. The charge was not substantiated, but it injected an immense amount of venom into the political situation. Meanwhile three great new

<sup>1</sup> In the electoral college the vote stood: Jackson, 99; Adams, 84; Crawford, 41; Clay, 37. The popular vote in eighteen states was as follows: Jackson, 155,872; Adams, 105,321; Crawford, 44,282; Clay, 46,587. In the six other states electors were chosen by the legislatures. See T. H. McKee, *National Conventions and Platforms*, pp. 21-23.

## PARTIES PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR

issues of domestic policy had come into the foreground—the bank, the tariff, and internal improvements. As a result minor divisions disappeared and new party lines were drawn which were to remain unbroken for more than a quarter of a century. On the one hand were the National Republicans, later to be called Whigs, who nominated Adams for a second term. On the other were the Democratic-Republicans, more commonly called Jacksonian Democrats and later plain Democrats, who supported Jackson. At the election of 1828 the latter was victorious, receiving an overwhelming majority in the electoral college and a substantial majority of the popular vote.<sup>1</sup>

The accession of Andrew Jackson to the Presidency marks the beginning of a new epoch in American politics. In the first place his elevation to power was due to the enfranchisement of the great mass of the plain people of the country. Most of the new Western states admitted to the Union prior to 1828 had established what amounted to manhood suffrage.<sup>2</sup> A frontier population, poor and struggling, but independent and virile throughout, cannot be expected to look with favor on property qualifications. By emigrating to the West disfranchised mechanics and laborers from the more aristocratic seaboard states not only improved their economic condition, but also acquired the full rights of citizenship. The example of the new commonwealths led to the abandonment or reduction to a nominal basis of the property qualifications in most of the older states.

A new  
epoch in  
American  
politics

Jackson not only owed his elevation to the recently enfranchised masses, he belonged to them and typified them thoroughly. All his six predecessors in the presidency had been aristocrats by birth and position, if not by conviction. Even Jefferson, democratic as were his beliefs, lived amid the surroundings of a Virginia country

Democracy  
of Jackson

<sup>1</sup> In the electoral college the vote stood: Jackson, 178; Adams, 83. The popular vote of twenty-three states was, for Jackson, 647,231; for Adams, 509,097. In only one state, South Carolina, were the electors chosen by the legislature. McKee, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. xiv.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

gentleman. Jackson, on the other hand, was born in poverty, he shared all the vicissitudes and struggles of frontier experience, and he possessed both the qualities and the defects bred by such an experience. Like Jefferson he was a democrat by conviction but in practice he was a democrat to a far greater degree than his illustrious predecessor.

"King  
Caucus"  
dethroned

The democratic upheaval which made Jackson president caused profound changes in party and governmental methods most of which have endured to the present day. Prior to this time it had been customary to make presidential nominations by legislative caucus. "King Caucus" was now dethroned and the delegate convention set in his place. Down to and including the campaign of 1828, no conventions were held. In 1832 for the first time all presidential candidates were nominated by conventions. The Anti-Masonic party was the first to accept the innovation. It held its first national convention in September, 1830, at Philadelphia, ten states sending delegates. This body issued a call for a second convention which was held at Baltimore a year later with delegates present from thirteen states. It soon became the practice of conventions to issue formal platforms containing declarations of party principles and statements of proposed party policies.<sup>1</sup>

Popular  
vote for  
presidential  
electors

Presidential electors formerly chosen in a number of states by the legislatures were henceforth with a few exceptions elected by popular vote. In the presidential election of 1792 the electors were chosen by the legislatures in nine out of fifteen states. Six of the twenty-four states still chose electors in this way in 1824. In 1828, South Carolina was the only state to choose its electors by legislature.

<sup>1</sup> The passage of resolutions at political meetings and conventions became a common practice during the Jacksonian period. However, it was not until 1840 that a formal platform was adopted at a Democratic national convention. Four years later the Whig convention adopted its first formal platform. A series of ten resolutions passed by the "Young Men's National Republican Convention," which met at Washington, May 11, 1832, is sometimes spoken of as the first platform of the Whig party, but as a matter of fact the presidential and vice-presidential candidates of that party had already been chosen by a convention proper held at Baltimore, December 12th of the preceding year.



## PARTIES PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR

It continued the practice down to the Civil War. One or two cases have occurred since.

Under the old system the electors of a state were frequently divided between the parties. The newer system of popular election on a general ticket usually throws the whole weight of the state into one or the other party column. It therefore enormously increases the importance of a popular majority, particularly in large and pivotal states. Jackson himself made every effort to obtain an amendment to the Constitution providing for the direct election of the President by popular vote, but without success. As a result of the changes noted above, however, the same result is approximated as closely as is possible through the cumbersome machinery provided by the Constitution.

Electors  
chosen on  
general  
ticket

Not only in party methods, but in the structure of the government itself Jackson's administration made profound and permanent changes. His immediate predecessors had fallen into the habit of deferring to Congress to such an extent that the primacy of the latter was generally accepted. Conceiving himself as the direct representative of the people as a whole in a gigantic struggle against privilege Jackson did not hesitate to join issue with the legislative branch. Prior to his administration the veto power had been considered more or less in the light of an advisory function and used altogether in but nine instances. Jackson's "twelve vetoes descended upon Congress like the blows of an iron flail."<sup>1</sup>

Jackson's  
vetoes

Political leaders of the older and more aristocratic type had looked with favor upon permanency of office holding. Rotation in office was advocated by the Jacksonian element as the truly democratic system. The number of political appointments made by Jackson was small indeed compared with the achievements of some of his successors. As contrasted with the moderation in this respect of his predecessors, however, Jackson's administration marks a startling innovation from which the spoils system with all its

Rotation  
and spoils

<sup>1</sup> Ford, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

evils was a necessary development. On the other hand, the use of patronage greatly aided the Presidency in its conflict with the legislative branch. Moreover, it strengthened party control and built up party organization upon a scale hitherto unprecedented, but now made inevitable by the extension of the electorate. Finally it aided in the suppression of faction within the administration party, forced the opposition to combine in order to make headway against it, thus powerfully stimulating the tendency to a two-party system. From the time of Jackson onward the Presidency has remained the great prize of political striving and the dominant power in the American government.

### Other Jacksonian issues

All the major issues which divided Democrats and Whigs during this period were supplied by Jackson's innovations in the use of his presidential powers and by his policies on domestic questions. He had the loyal support of the Democrats in his suppression of nullification and in his embittered fight against that "monster," the United States Bank. The first formal platform of the Democratic party, adopted in 1840, declared that "the federal government is one of limited powers . . . to be strictly construed." It held that "the Constitution does not confer upon the general government the power to commence and carry on a general system of internal improvements." Opposition to protectionism was implied by the statement that "justice and sound policy forbid the federal government to foster one branch of industry to the detriment of another." The Democratic platform of 1840 further held that "Congress has no power to charter a United States Bank," and denounced such an institution in unmeasured terms. The position which the party was to maintain on the slavery issue found expression as follows: "Congress has no power under the Constitution to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several states; . . . that all efforts by Abolitionists or others made to induce Congress to interfere with questions of slavery, or to take incipient steps in relation thereto, are calculated to lead to

## PARTIES PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR

the most alarming and dangerous consequences . . . and endanger the stability and permanence of the Union."

Opposition to "King Andrew" and all his works was the cement that bound together the discordant elements which formed the National Republican party. Early in its existence it was sometimes referred to as the National Democratic party, showing that the old prejudice against the latter term had completely disappeared, that, indeed, it had acquired popularity. But the Jacksonian element had so thoroughly pre-empted the word that the National Republicans had to cast about for another title. In 1834, they began to assume the name "Whig," which commended itself because of its association with the struggle of the Colonists against royal usurpation during the American Revolution.

National  
Republicans  
or Whigs

Throughout its existence the Whig party suffered from the fact that it was so largely an "anti" party. It had brilliant leaders—Clay, Webster, and John Quincy Adams, and until 1840, Calhoun acted with it. But the old adage that "politics makes strange bedfellows" never had a better illustration than in the heterogeneous make-up of the Whig party. It included such various elements as (1) the National Republican advocates of the "American System"—a national bank, internal improvements, and protection; (2) nullifiers and extreme states' rights men; (3) a majority of the Anti-Masons;<sup>1</sup> (4) former Democrats who had become disgruntled over Jackson's use of the veto, his distribution of patronage, and other "usurpations"; and finally (5) the many virulent enemies of the latter on personal or political grounds. In order to hold these divergent groups together and to attract as many as possible of the new political organizations which sprang up during this period the platforms of the party became models of evasion, reticence, and brevity as to

Discordant  
elements  
among the  
Whigs

<sup>1</sup> The Anti-Masonic party was formed in opposition to certain alleged abuses on the part of that and other secret societies. It was active from 1828 to 1832 in New York and neighboring states, where for a time it was the most important anti-Democratic organization.

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issues. Indeed, some of these platforms consisted largely of eulogies on their candidates, notably that of 1848 which was given up almost entirely to a glorification of the record of General Zachary Taylor.

Whig victories, 1840, 1848

The Whigs were successful in two national elections only (1840, 1848), but the fruits of the first of these victories were largely lost to them by the death of President Harrison one month after his inauguration. As vice-presidential candidate with the latter they had nominated John Tyler of Virginia, who was temporarily affiliated with their party, but who at bottom was an "eclectic Democrat."<sup>1</sup> The sole purpose of his nomination had been to secure the support of a Southern element which was opposed to the Democratic party. Soon after Tyler's accession to the Presidency the true nature of his convictions became apparent. Before the end of his term the Whig members of Congress virtually read him out of the party, declaring that "all political connection between them and John Tyler was at an end from that day forth."

Slavery and the Whigs

With the rise of the slavery issue to a position of paramount importance in American politics the incongruity of ~~the elements making up the Whig party~~ became even more apparent. There were "Conscience Whigs," who were radical anti-slavery men; there were "Cotton Whigs," who wanted peace at any price on the question for the benefit of the cotton trade; there were strong pro-slavery Whigs in the South; and every possible grade of interest and indifference between these various groups. Strenuous efforts were made to conciliate these irreconcilable tendencies and to hold the party together in spite of them. In the campaign of 1852 the Whigs made a last desperate attempt to maintain party unity on the basis of the Compromise of 1850. Their platform for that campaign contained the following plank accepting even the Fugitive Slave law as a finality—a step which sealed the fate of the party:

<sup>1</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *Division and Reunion*, p. 135.

## PARTIES PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR

That the series of acts of the Thirty-second Congress, the act known as the Fugitive Slave law included, are received and acquiesced in by the Whig party of the United States as a settlement in principle and substance of the dangerous and exciting questions which they embrace, and so far as they are concerned we will maintain them and insist upon their strict enforcement until time and experience shall demonstrate the necessity for further legislation to guard against the evasion of the laws on the one hand, and the abuse of their powers on the other, not impairing their present efficiency; and we deprecate all further agitation of the question thus settled as dangerous to our peace, and will discountenance all efforts to continue or renew such agitation, whenever, wherever, or however the attempt may be made; and we will maintain the system as essential to the nationality of the Whig party and the integrity of the Union.

The adoption of this resolution justified in large part the remark that "the Whig party died of an attempt to swallow the Fugitive Slave law." In the ensuing election it secured the electoral vote of but four states. The Whig convention of 1856 accepted the nominees of the American (Know-Nothing) party, but their combined popular vote fell far behind that of the newly formed Republican party and they obtained the electoral vote of only one state. "Old-line" conservative Whigs made up a large part of the Constitutional Union party in 1860, but the Whig party proper was moribund in 1852, and virtually dead in 1856.

Four years later the Democratic party was disrupted by the same issue. The anti-slavery agitation which came to play so profoundly disintegrating a part in American politics at this time dates back to the early 'thirties. William Lloyd Garrison issued the first number of the *Liberator* on January 1, 1831. The New England Anti-Slavery Society was formed in 1832, and expanded a year later into the American Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison himself led the radical wing of the movement, which in addition to abolition espoused a number of extremist ideas not unlike those held by theoretical anarchists at the present time, and in accordance with these ideas he and his followers refused to vote or to organize for political action.

"Swallow-  
ing the  
Fugitive  
Slave law"

Slavery  
disrupts  
Democrats  
1860



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Anti-slavery  
agitation

Among more moderate elements of the population anti-slavery agitation made many converts. The latter looked upon the question not only as one of morals, but also as one of politics, and therefore to be dealt with by means of political organization and activity. In general they were willing to concede the right of states which desired to preserve their "peculiar institution" to do so. But they were resolutely opposed to the extension of slavery into new areas. The admission of Texas in 1845, the cession made by Mexico at the close of the war of 1846-47, and the territory confirmed to the possession of the United States by the peaceful settlement of the Oregon boundary question in 1846 therefore added so much fresh fuel to the flames of the slavery controversy.

Liberty  
party of  
1840

In 1840 the political abolitionists formed a third party opposed both to the Whigs and to the Democrats. It was the first step which led ultimately to the formation of the Republican party. The new Liberty party received only seven thousand votes in 1840, but it polled sixty-five thousand votes in 1844. Four years later large reinforcements were received from the "Conscience," or Free Soil, Whigs. Meanwhile, the Democratic party had begun to disintegrate on the slavery issue. Many of its members in the North were stoutly opposed to the extension of slavery in the territories. Led by the "Barnburners" of New York they also began to rally to the new movement, which now took the name of the National Free Soil Party. Its platform for 1848 boldly announced "that Congress has no more power to make a slave than to make a king; no more power to institute or establish slavery than to institute or establish a monarchy; . . . that we accept the issue which the slave power has forced upon us; and to their demand for more slave states and more slave territory, our calm but final answer is: No more slave states and no more slave territory."

Free Soil  
party

The strength of the Free Soil movement fell off somewhat in 1852, as a result of the compromise legislation of 1850 and the general effort made to treat that legislation



## PARTIES PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR

as a final disposition of the slavery question. Nevertheless, the party reaffirmed the position taken in 1848, and added a vigorous condemnation of the Fugitive Slave Act as "repugnant to the Constitution, to the principles of the common law, to the spirit of Christianity, and to the sentiments of the civilized world. We therefore deny its binding force on the American people, and demand its immediate and total repeal."

All the hopes of the "Finality Men" that the slavery question had been disposed of by the legislation of 1850 were shattered when the Kansas-Nebraska bill passed in 1854. By this act the Missouri Compromise was repealed and territory which since 1820 had been considered beyond the reach of slavery was opened up to dispute. Immediately all the "Anti-Nebraska" forces began to draw together in opposition to the further extension of slavery. It was the final step that precipitated the formation of the Republican party.

Kansas-Nebraska bill

The process was facilitated by a curious interlude in the politics of the time. Immigration had been pouring into the country with great rapidity during the 'forties and 'fifties, and the participation of the newly enfranchised foreign element in politics was marked by certain gross abuses which aroused the antipathy of large numbers of native Americans. A secret movement was launched against this foreign influence, the members of which were pledged to feign ignorance when questioned about it and consequently came to be called "Know-Nothings." By 1854 the new movement had attained considerable strength, carrying many local elections in states both North and South. In 1856 it held a national convention, nominating candidates who were accepted later by the remnant of the Whigs. Its platform for that year contained the following planks: "Americans must rule America; and to this end native born citizens should be selected for all state, federal, and municipal government employment, in preference to all others." "A change in the laws of naturalization, making a continued residence of twenty-one years

"Know-Nothings"

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

. . . an indispensable requisite for citizenship hereafter." "Opposition to any union between church and state." Non-committal as to slavery, the Know-Nothings were sometimes derided as "Do Nothings" on that issue. Nevertheless, the movement detached large numbers of Whigs and Democrats from their old party allegiance. With the subsidence of the anti-foreign movement these men found it somewhat easier than would otherwise have been the case to join with former Free-Soilers in the organization of the Republican party.

Republican  
party, 1856

In the election of 1856 the new party revealed surprising strength, carrying all of New England and in addition the states of New York, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Although the Democrats were victorious, a sharp division of sentiment began to appear among them. To "Fire-Eaters" in the South the demonstration of Republican strength was proof positive that their peculiar institution was marked for destruction. This conviction carried them to lengths which alienated the sympathies of Northern Democrats. Public opinion in both sections was greatly embittered by the struggle for Kansas and by John Brown's raid. The decision in the Dred Scott case, which virtually pronounced the aims of the Republicans to be unconstitutional, merely intensified the spirit of that party, but it drove still deeper the wedge between Northern and Southern Democrats.

Issues of  
1860

In 1860 came the inevitable split, the Southern Democrats nominating Breckinridge and the Northern Democrats nominating Douglas. The Constitutional Unionist party, made up largely of "Old Line," or conservative, Whigs, nominated Bell. On the great issue of the campaign the position of the parties may be summed up as follows: (1) the Republicans held that slavery should be barred from national territory by national power; (2) the Southern Democrats held that it should be protected in national territory by national power; (3) the Northern Democrats proclaimed the doctrine of national noninterference and of popular sovereignty, according to which

## PARTIES PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR

the question of slavery should be left to the decision of the white people of each territory; and (4) the Constitutional Unionists were evasive on the slavery issue, recognizing no political principles "other than the Constitution of the country, the union of the states, and the enforcement of the laws."<sup>1</sup>

From the days of Jeffersonian Republicans and Hamiltonian Federalists onward the influence of American parties as a whole was strongly exerted as a nationalizing and unifying force. By associating great masses of men regardless of state lines in the pursuit of common political aims they had helped to break down much of the isolation and animosity which existed between the Colonies. In the long period under consideration they had brought about a uniform basis of suffrage throughout the country, and built up great national political organizations all designed upon a uniform plan and pursuing uniform methods. That they faced each other in 1860 upon sectional lines was not the fault of parties but in spite of them.<sup>2</sup> For years, indeed, Whigs and Democrats alike had struggled incessantly, but in the end unavailingly, for party unity through compromise. "The Union was not broken up because sectional parties had been formed, but sectional parties were formed because the Union had actually become sectionalized."<sup>3</sup> Fundamentally the breach was due to differences of soil and climate and to those economic conditions dependent upon them, particularly after the inven-

Nationalism  
and  
sectionalism

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Woodburn, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Lincoln carried every state north of Mason and Dixon's line except New Jersey, and from that state he received four out of seven votes in the electoral college. In addition he carried the far Western states of California and Oregon. The Southern wing of the Democracy received the whole electoral vote of that section, excepting that of the border states, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, which went to the Constitutional Union; and of Missouri, which was carried by the Northern Democrats. The popular vote was as follows: Lincoln, 1,866,352; Breckinridge, 847,514; Bell, 587,830; and Douglas, 1,375,157. In the electoral college the large popular vote of the last named counted for little because it was scattered throughout the Northern states, where it was wiped out by Republican majorities.

<sup>3</sup> H. E. von Holst, quoted by W. Wilson, *Division and Reunion*, p. 212.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

tion of the cotton gin made slavery seem essential to the prosperity of the South. After seventy years of union and peaceful constitutional development the threat of secession, so often resorted to by defeated parties in the past, was to become a reality. The great issues of American politics were submitted to the arbitrament of the sword.

### BOOK NOTES

OF the general treatises on political parties cited in Book Notes under Ch. I, J. A. Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems* (1903), devotes by far the largest amount of space to the historical aspect of the subject. \* H. J. Ford, *The Rise and Growth of American Politics* (1898), is the most brilliant and original contribution that has been made in this field during the last quarter century. \* E. Stanwood, *A History of the Presidency* (2 vols., latest ed., 1916), presents documents and statistics, with comment, on presidential conventions, candidates, and platforms down to and including 1916. T. H. McKee, *The National Conventions and Platforms of all Political Parties*, is a valuable compendium which gives statistics of the popular and electoral vote in each presidential election from 1789 on, in addition to the matters mentioned in the title. J. Macy, *Political Parties in the United States, 1846-1861* (1900), "treats especially of the great Whig failure and its consequences."

Among the larger comprehensive works dealing wholly or in part with this period the following are of prime importance: H. Adams, *History of the United States, 1801-1817* (9 vols., 1889-1891); A. B. Hart, editor, *The American Nation: A History, 1300-1917* (28 vols., 1903-1918); R. Hildreth, *History of the United States, 1492-1821* (6 vols., 1849-1856); H. von Holst, *Constitutional and Political History of the United States, 1750-1861* (8 vols., new ed., 1899); J. Schouler, *History of the United States under the Constitution, 1783-1865* (6 vols., 1894-1899); J. B. McMaster, *A History of the People*

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of the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War (8 vols., 1883-1912); W. Wilson, *A History of the American People, 1492-1900* (5 vols., 1902); and J. Winsor, editor, *Narrative and Critical History of America, 1000-1850* (8 vols., 1884-1889). For briefer treatment of political topics see J. S. Bassett, *A Short History of the United States, 1492-1920* (1921). On special periods or subjects of more than usual political importance the following are useful: J. S. Bassett, *The Federalistic System*; E. Channing, *The Jeffersonian System*; W. MacDonald, *Jacksonian Democracy*; F. J. Turner, *Rise of the New West*; A. B. Hart, *Slavery and Abolition*; and T. C. Smith, *Parties and Slavery*.

Historical treatises devoting special attention to the growth of political parties have been published as follows: J. P. Gordy, *Political History of the United States* (1902); A. Johnson, *American Political History, 1763-1876*, edited and supplemented by J. A. Woodburn (1905); and S. D. Fess, *History of Political Theory and Party Organization in the United States* (1910).

The more important historical works written from economic viewpoints closely related to party development are: E. L. Bogart, *Economic History of the United States* (1908); K. Coman, *Industrial History of the United States* (rev. ed., 1910); D. R. Dewey, *Financial History of the United States* (1903); F. W. Taussig, *Tariff History of the United States* (1905); and E. Stanwood, *Tariff Controversies of the Nineteenth Century* (2 vols., 1903). For further historical references, consult the *Guide to the Study and Reading of American History* (1912), by E. Channing, A. B. Hart, and F. J. Turner. Two recent works of importance in the field of economic history are I. Lippincott, *Economic Development of the United States* (1921); and L. R. Wells, *Industrial History of the United States* (1922).



## CHAPTER V

### DEVELOPMENT OF PARTIES IN THE UNITED STATES 1860-1912

Periods of  
party  
history

DURING the first period of American party history (1792-1824), Democratic-Republicans contested with Federalists so long as the latter remained in the field. In the second period (1828-1860), Whigs struggled with Democrats until the break-up of the former. The third period, extending from 1860 to the present time, has been given over to a duel between the Democratic and Republican parties. During the first part of this period (1860-1876) the great issues were those of war and reconstruction. From 1876 on, economic questions—the tariff, currency, railroads, trusts, and labor—were paramount until the outbreak of the World War in 1914 turned the attention of the people to a new set of issues.

Disintegrat-  
ing tenden-  
cies

As in each of the two earlier periods of our party history, the latter part of the present period has been marked by disintegrating tendencies which reached their climax in the Democratic party with the campaign of 1896, and in the Republican party with the campaign of 1912. While these tendencies succeeded in making important changes in the policies of both parties, they failed to cause the disappearance of either as the Federalists disappeared in the second, and the Whigs in the fifth decade of the last century. On the contrary, Republicans and Democrats continue to confront each other at the present time with strength so evenly divided that successful competition by minor parties is out of the question.



## PARTIES 1860-1912

### I. WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION, 1860-1876

With the outbreak of the Rebellion a considerable number of "War Democrats" in the North gave valiant support to the Union cause. Other elements of the party desired to conciliate the South, condemning both "Abolition fanatics" and "Southern Fire-Eaters," whom they held equally responsible for the bloody struggle. A few extremists among them—the hated "Traitors," "Butternuts," and "Copperheads"—were guilty of disloyal utterances and acts. The Democratic platform of 1864 denounced executive usurpations "under the pretense of a military necessity or war power higher than the Constitution," and declared in words that were often brought up to plague the party, that "after four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war . . . justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare demand that immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities, with a view to the ultimate convention of the states or other peaceable means, to the end that . . . peace may be restored on the basis of the federal union of the states." It is only fair to add that in his letter of acceptance, McClellan, the party's nominee for the Presidency, disavowed this plank.

Democratic  
party during  
Civil War

The Republican party also had its radicals and others of more moderate views regarding war policies. Abolition, it will be recalled, was not one of the party's purposes either in 1856 or in 1860. As a war measure, however, President Lincoln took this step so far as slaves in the rebellious states were concerned, by his famous Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863. Even this did not satisfy the Radical Republicans, who held a convention in May, 1864, and adopted a platform which, while demanding that "the rebellion must be suppressed by force of arms and without compromise," severely criticized by implication some of Lincoln's war measures, pronounced in favor of a "one-term policy for the Presidency," and even went the length of demanding "the confiscation of the

Republican  
party during  
Civil War

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Renomi-  
nation of  
Lincoln

lands of the rebels." John C. Frémont, who had been the Republican candidate in 1856, was nominated for the Presidency by this convention.

Downfall  
of the Con-  
federacy

Presidency  
of Andrew  
Johnson

Shortly thereafter Lincoln was unanimously renominated on the first ballot at the Baltimore convention.<sup>1</sup> The platform unqualifiedly approved his administration, demanded the unconditional surrender of the rebels and the utter and complete extirpation of slavery from the soil of the Republic. For Vice-President, Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, a Union man formerly affiliated with the Democratic party, was nominated. In the course of the campaign the candidates of the Radical Republicans withdrew and the support of that wing of the party was given to Lincoln and Johnson, who triumphantly carried every state then in the Union, with the exception of three. The downfall of the Confederacy followed early in 1865. Before the end of the year the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery within the United States, was declared in force. Thus the questions of secession and slavery, which for so long had overshadowed our political life, were "settled for all time to come . . . never to be renewed or reagitated."<sup>2</sup> Upon the conclusion of the war reconstruction became the order of the day. Lincoln's conciliatory attitude upon this question was well known, but to the irreparable loss of the country he was removed by the hand of an assassin six weeks after his second inauguration. Johnson shared Lincoln's moderate views on reconstruction, but after succeeding to the Presidency his words and acts in giving them effect were anything but moderate. Soon he became involved in open hostility with large Republican majorities in both houses of Congress, with the result that he was rendered well-nigh impotent, although by no means voiceless. In the end he escaped

<sup>1</sup> Although commonly referred to as the Republican convention of 1864, the gathering at Baltimore took the title officially of the National Union convention. In large part this change of name was made in the hope of attracting the votes of war Democrats.

<sup>2</sup> Democratic platform, 1868, McKee, p. 132.

conviction on impeachment proceedings by the margin of a single vote in the Senate.

Under the circumstances the Republican party not unnaturally turned to the support of its more radical element in Congress, whose motto with regard to all Southern questions was "thorough." By the Reconstruction Act of March 2, 1867, the seceding states with the exception of Tennessee were divided into five districts, which were placed under the command of generals of the army empowered to direct the processes of reconstruction. Re-admission to the Union was made dependent upon a number of onerous conditions, including acceptance of the Fourteenth Amendment. A considerable number of Northern Republican politicians emigrated to the South at this time, and under the protection of federal bayonets organized the inexperienced negro voters. As they were said to carry all their worldly goods in the homemade traveling bags of the period, these immigrants came to be called "Carpetbaggers." Under their influence legislatures chosen largely by negroes indulged in an orgy of extravagance and corruption. Meanwhile the most influential white citizens of the South were excluded from the franchise because of their participation in rebellion.

The "thorough" policy of reconstruction

The Presidential election of 1868 was fought out largely on these issues. In its platform of that year the Democratic party hotly arraigned the "Radical party," as it called the Republicans, for its "unparalleled oppression and tyranny" in subjecting "ten states, in time of profound peace, to military despotism and negro supremacy," and demanded their "immediate restoration . . . to their rights in the Union under the Constitution." The Republicans nominated and elected General Grant on a platform congratulating the country on "the assured success of the reconstruction policy of Congress," but added a clause favoring "the removal of the disqualifications and restrictions imposed upon the late rebels in the same measure as the spirit of disloyalty will die out and as may be consistent with the safety of the loyal people." In 1869,

Issues of 1868

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

the Fifteenth Amendment was proposed, and made a further condition for the readmission of the states not already reconstructed.

Liberal  
Republican  
Movement,  
1872

During Grant's first administration the remaining unreconstructed states were admitted to congressional representation, but the Force bills were passed in an effort to suppress Ku-Klux disorders. Even in the North, however, a revulsion of feeling had set in against the "thorough" policy of the radical Republicans, which led to the first serious break in the party that had occurred since its organization. A group of liberal Republican leaders, who favored not only a general amnesty, but also civil-service reform, specie payments, and a revenue tariff, called a national convention at Cincinnati in 1872. But the nomination of this convention was captured for Horace Greeley, the brilliant but somewhat erratic editor of the New York *Tribune*, who was one of the most extreme protectionists living and who, moreover, was by no means satisfactory to the civil-service-reform element of the new movement. In deference to their nominee the liberal Republicans frankly dodged the tariff issue, but a split began in their ranks immediately after the Cincinnati convention. Nevertheless, the Democratic party accepted both the platform and the nominees of the liberal Republicans. Thereupon a small group of "straight-out" Democrats seceded and held a convention of their own. General Grant was renominated by the regular Republicans and was elected by a larger vote, both popular and electoral, than had been cast for him four years earlier. The campaign of 1872 also marked the first appearance in national politics of the Prohibition and Greenback parties.

Grant's second administration

Although the liberal Republicans failed to elect their candidate in 1872, public sentiment turned strongly in favor of their policies during Grant's second administration. A general amnesty had been passed in 1872, but disturbances continued in the South. In spite of the President's efforts to sustain the Reform Act of 1872, the civil service of the country was demoralized to an extreme de-

## PARTIES 1860-1912

gree by political appointees, and in 1874 Congress refused to vote funds for the further enforcement of the law. The "Salary Grab" was most unpopular, and the widespread corruption revealed by the investigations of the Crédit Mobilier and Whisky Ring profoundly discredited the party in power.

The effects of the resulting shift of public sentiment toward a more liberal policy were made manifest in the Republican national convention of 1876, which refused to nominate James G. Blaine, the magnetic but not immaculate idol of the congressional machine, and named instead Rutherford B. Hayes, a devoted friend of civil-service reform and a stanch foe of corruption. The Democratic party nominated Samuel J. Tilden, and for the first time since the Civil War polled a majority of the popular vote of the country. Tilden received without question 184 votes in the electoral college, lacking but one of the number necessary to elect him. Hayes received, also without question, 163 votes, the returns from four states being contested. Of the latter, three were the Southern states of South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida, the reconstructed Republican governments of which enjoyed the support of federal troops. In the end the Electoral Commission which was created to break the deadlock decided every contest by a strict party vote in favor of Hayes, giving him the election by 185 to 184 electoral votes.

Hayes-Tilden contest, 1876

One of the first acts of Hayes's administration was the withdrawal of federal troops from Southern states. The long and bitter process of reconstruction was thus brought to an end. Freed from military control and with white supremacy restored, these states promptly overthrew their Republican governments and aligned themselves solidly in the Democratic column. From 1876 to 1916 not one of the eleven was carried by the Republican party in a national election. The Fifteenth Amendment, which provided that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of race, color, or previous condi-

The solid South after reconstruction



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

tion of servitude," became virtually a dead letter so far as colored citizens were concerned over wide areas in the South. By the Fourteenth Amendment the power of the Democratic party has actually been increased. The latter amendment annulled the old three-fifths rule of the Constitution, and thus enabled the Southern states to take full advantage of their colored population—regardless of the fact that it is excluded from voting—in determining the apportionment of representatives, and hence their vote in the electoral college. Nor has the federal government ever cared to exercise the power given under the two amendments to penalize such limitations of the suffrage.

## II. ECONOMIC ISSUES, 1876-1914

Economic  
recovery  
after the  
Civil War

Following the Civil War the economic recovery of the country was exceedingly rapid. Between 1860 and 1880, the population of the United States increased from thirty-one million to fifty million. During the same period railroad mileage more than trebled, and in 1869 the first transcontinental railroad was completed. The aggregate wealth of the country rose from sixteen billion in 1860 to forty-two billion in 1880. Freed from the incubus of slavery, the South was invaded by commerce and manufactures, and the lines drawn by the old economic sectionalism began to disappear. Immigration, temporarily halted during the war, set in afterward with increased volume. An unprecedented advance was recorded in the growth of cities.

Accompa-  
nied by eco-  
nomic mal-  
adjustments

Gratifying as was this development taken as a whole, it was accompanied by certain grave economic maladjustments which soon made themselves felt in the political field. Prices were enormously inflated during the Civil War, but from 1866 to 1896 they fell steadily. Producers and the debtor class, which included a large number of farmers struggling to meet mortgage payments, found their burdens constantly growing heavier under these price conditions. Particularly in the Middle West the



grangers were oppressed by high freight rates and by the discriminations practiced by the great railroad combinations which had come to dominate this territory. In 1873, the business of the country was shaken to its foundations by the most severe panic it had ever experienced. Unemployment was widespread and the ensuing period of depression lasted till 1878.

The resulting discontent of the agricultural and laboring classes first found political expression through the Greenback party. Originally the members of this party expected to solve their economic problems largely by increasing the issue of legal-tender paper money, which, they thought, would bring about higher prices and higher wages, relieve business depression, and reduce the burdens of the debtor class. Later they added various measures designed to benefit labor and to destroy railroad and other monopolies. They were thus the forerunners of the Union Labor party of 1888, and of the People's party, or Populists, who first made their appearance about 1890.

Discontent  
expressed in  
Greenback  
party

As in the case of other third-party movements, both the Greenbackers and the Populists were derided at first as wild-eyed fanatics and calamity howlers. The voting strength of the former was never considerable,<sup>1</sup> but in 1892 the Populists startled the country by casting more than a million votes for their candidates and securing twenty-two votes in the electoral college. Their platform for that year demanded (1) a national currency issued by the general government only, a full legal tender, and that without the use of banking corporations; (2) the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the present legal ratio of sixteen to one; (3) the increase of the circulating medium to not less than \$50 per capita;<sup>2</sup> (4) a graduated income tax; (5) postal savings banks; (6) government ownership and operation of railroads, telegraphs, and telephones; and (7) withdrawal from railroads and other cor-

The Popu-  
list party

<sup>1</sup> The Greenbacker vote in 1876 was 81,740; in 1880, 308,578; in 1884, 175,365. In 1888, 146,934 votes were cast for the Union Labor candidates.

<sup>2</sup> In 1892 the per-capita circulation was \$24.60. In 1918 it had reached \$50.18.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

porations of all land in excess of their actual needs and the holding of the same for actual settlers. Further the Populist platform of 1892 condemned "the fallacy of protecting American labor under the present system which opens our ports to the pauper and criminal classes of the world"; expressed cordial sympathy with "the efforts of organized workingmen to shorten the hours of labor"; commended the initiative and referendum; and favored constitutional amendments limiting the President and Vice-President to one term, and providing for the direct election of Senators.

"Straddling"  
the silver  
question

From 1880 to 1892, inclusive, the Republican and Democratic parties dealt very gingerly with the issues on which Greenbackers and Populists were so outspoken. Particularly was this true of the silver question, which caused deep divisions of sentiment among the adherents of both the old parties. It was notorious that there were "Gold Democrats" and "Silver Democrats," "Silver Republicans" and "Gold Republicans." Never was the platform art of "straddling" more highly developed in order to hold these discordant elements true to their traditional allegiance.

The tariff  
issue

So far as possible the old parties attempted to make the tariff the dominant issue of their campaigns during this period. Even on this issue, however, caution prevailed, for there were divisions of sentiment regarding it on both sides. In 1880, and again in 1892, the Democratic party pronounced in favor of a tariff for revenue only, but in the two intervening campaigns it recognized in its platforms that reductions or revisions should make due allowance for the difference between the wages of American and foreign labor. The Republican platform of 1880 "re-affirmed the belief avowed in 1876, that the duties levied for the purposes of revenue should so discriminate as to favor American labor." This was strengthened somewhat by the plank of 1884 which demanded "that the imposition of duties on foreign imports shall be made, not 'for revenue only,' but that in raising the requisite reve-

## PARTIES 1860-1912

nues for the government such duties shall be so levied as to afford security to our diversified industries and protection to the rights and wages of the laborer." Finally in 1888 the party came out "uncompromisingly in favor of the American system of protection."

The unbroken tenure of power by the Republicans from 1860 to 1884 placed the Democrats in a strategical position to condemn unsparingly the alleged inefficiency, extravagance, corruption, and spoils-hunting of their opponents. On the other hand, the Republicans made the most of their war record, and took credit to themselves for the material growth and general prosperity of the country during this period.

Democratic  
"outs" *vs.*  
Republican  
"ins"

An extraordinarily close balance of power existed between the two great parties from 1880 to 1892.<sup>1</sup> In 1880 the Republicans were victorious with Garfield; in 1884, the Democrats with Cleveland. Harrison was elected over Cleveland in 1888, but four years later this result was reversed. The extreme caution characterizing the platform utterances of the two parties during this period was partly due to their substantial equilibrium which made any innovation dangerous, as well as to the divisions of sentiment among the adherents of each of them even on major issues. Congressional elections reflected the same conditions. None of the four Presidents of this period ended his term of office without finding one or both legislative houses in the hands of the opposing party.

Close  
balance of  
power,  
1880-1892

Caught thus in the political doldrums, positive legislation of any sort was extraordinarily difficult. Nevertheless, some beginnings of importance may be noted. In 1883 the Pendleton Civil Service Act was passed; and in 1887 the Interstate Commerce Commission was created—neither being a partisan achievement. During Harri-

Important  
legislative  
acts

<sup>1</sup> Garfield's popular plurality in 1880 was only 7,018, out of a total vote of over nine million. In 1884 Cleveland was elected with a popular plurality of 62,683; but in 1888 he was defeated in the electoral college, although he had a popular plurality of 98,017. Four years later he was again successful with a popular plurality of 380,810 out of a total vote of 12,059,351.

son's administration the McKinley tariff, the Sherman anti-trust law, and the Sherman Silver Purchase Act were passed. The last named—a sop to silver and inflation sentiment—increased the government's purchases of silver to fifty million dollars a year, as compared with thirty million under the Bland-Allison Act of 1878. As the Senate was controlled by Republicans during the whole of Cleveland's first administration, Democratic legislation on the tariff was impossible. In 1894, during his second administration, the Wilson tariff bill, which also carried a provision for an income tax, was passed, but Democratic protectionists in the Senate so amended it that the President in disgust allowed it to become a law without his signature. Years of bitter struggle for tariff reform thus ended in a disgraceful fiasco.

Repeal of  
the silver-  
purchase  
clause

Events during Cleveland's second term put an end to the state of party equipoise that had lasted for sixteen years. A disastrous panic in 1893 caused widespread suffering and greatly strengthened the radical Populist movement. To allay the panic the President, by an extraordinary exercise of his influence, secured the repeal of the silver-purchase clause of the Sherman Act. This step naturally incurred the bitter enmity of the silver element inside as well as outside his party. A decision by the Supreme Court that the income tax was unconstitutional further inflamed radical sentiment.

Silver  
Democrats  
control con-  
vention of  
1896

As the convention year 1896 approached it became apparent that the Populist strength manifested in 1892 had tremendously increased, particularly in the West and South. In the latter part of the country it had grown to such an extent that it threatened Democratic control and even the political supremacy of the white race. Regardless of the influence of the administration and the strenuous opposition of the Gold Democrats of the East, Silver Democrats from the West and South controlled the Democratic National convention of 1896 by a two-thirds majority. They secured the adoption of a platform which recognized that "the money question is paramount to all

others at this time"; demanded "the free and unlimited coinage of both silver and gold at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1 without waiting for the aid or consent of any other nation"; favored "such legislation as will prevent the demonetization of any kind of legal-tender money by private contract"; and denounced "the issuance of notes intended to circulate as money by national banks." The revenue-tariff policy of the party was reaffirmed, but further agitation of the matter was deprecated until after the money question had been settled. Stricter control by the federal government of trusts and pools, and enlargement of the powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission were demanded. By implication the decision of the Supreme Court adverse to the income tax was criticized, and Congress was called upon "to use all the constitutional power which remains after that decision, or which may come from its reversal by the court as it may hereafter be constituted, so that the burden of taxation may be impartially laid, to the end that wealth may bear its due proportion of the expense of the government." William Jennings Bryan, one of the younger leaders of the radical element of the party, who had electrified the convention by his oratory, was nominated for the Presidency.

The Republicans had already held their national convention three weeks earlier, drafting a platform which showed their intention of making protection the paramount issue of the campaign and nominating William McKinley for the Presidency. A free-silver plank was introduced by 110 Republican delegates from Western states, who bolted when it failed and later formed a Silver party which supported Bryan. The money plank adopted by the regular Republican convention pronounced "unreservedly for sound money," and expressed opposition "to the free coinage of silver except by international agreement with the leading nations of the world, which we pledge ourselves to promote, and until such agreement can be obtained, the existing gold standard must be preserved."

Republicans  
for "sound  
money"



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Gold Democrats bolt

Bryan's nomination was accepted enthusiastically by the Populists, but they refused to indorse his running mate, Arthur Sewall of Maine, because he was a banker and presumably of conservative tendencies. The situation was further complicated by a bolt of the Gold Democrats, who held a convention in September and nominated candidates of their own.

"Battle of the standards"

No campaign since the Civil War was contested with such intensity and bitterness as that of 1896. In spite of the efforts of the Republican leaders to push the tariff issue into the foreground, it was ruthlessly thrust aside by the "battle of the standards"—gold *versus* silver. Discussion raged hottest over this point, but far greater interests were felt to be at stake. To the Bryan Democrats it was a struggle against the combined money powers, subtly corrupting and exploiting the government and people. To their opponents it was a fight against disorder, repudiation, dishonesty, and socialism.

Class and sectional interests involved

The elements of a class struggle were involved—farmers and laborers against banking, commercial, and manufacturing interests. A new sectionalism made its appearance, the South and West against the North and East. Campaign funds of unprecedented size were employed. Bryan received considerable financial support from silvermine owners, but the amount at his disposal was small indeed compared with the large contributions collected from the commercial and protected interests of the country by Hanna, chairman of the Republican National Committee. McKinley was successful in November by a vote of 271 to 176 in the electoral college, receiving a popular vote of 7,104,779 as against 6,502,925 for Bryan.

Imperialism the paramount issue, 1900

In 1900 the same candidates for the Presidency headed the tickets of the two major parties. Bryan secured an indorsement of the silver plank of 1896, but the Democratic platform declared imperialism to be the paramount issue of the campaign, and denounced the colonial policy pursued by the administration in the possessions ceded by Spain at the close of the war of 1898. An aggressive anti-



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trust plank was also adopted. McKinley's administration received the warm indorsement of the Republican party, and he was again successful by a larger vote, both popular and electoral, than in 1896. At the same time Theodore Roosevelt was elected Vice-President, succeeding to the Presidency upon the assassination of McKinley six months after his inauguration.

A long-continued period of industrial depression followed the panic of 1893, but conditions improved somewhat with the clear-cut decision of the money question in 1896. After the conclusion of the Spanish-American War prosperity returned and a period of unexampled business expansion and combination was inaugurated. Pools and combinations of railroads had profoundly affected the course of politics during the period from 1876 to 1896. The same movement was now to enter the industrial field.

Business expansion

Between 1890 and 1900 the number of industrial combinations proper grew from 18 with a total nominal capital of \$288,000,000, to 157 with a total nominal capital of \$3,150,000,000. By 1904, the leading trusts and railways of the country were more or less interlocked and connected under two great capitalistic groups. Questions arising from this enormous centralization of economic power inevitably took the center of the political stage and retained it until the outbreak of the World War.

Rise of industrial combinations

Reversing the movement of the previous period, the trend of general prices since 1896 has been upward. Wages followed, but not so closely or generally as to prevent the emergence of the cost of living problem as a vital political question.

Prices and wages

The campaign of 1904 was apathetic to an extreme degree. Roosevelt's great personal popularity made his nomination by the Republicans inevitable, and he had the support of a united party in spite of the apprehensions caused in certain quarters by his vigorous expressions on the trust and other questions. The Democrats nominated Alton B. Parker of New York, a justice of the highest court of that state. Before their convention adjourned

Campaign of 1904

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the candidate addressed a telegram to it declaring his unflinching adherence to the gold standard. Bryan thereupon announced that the party had fallen under the domination of Wall Street, although as a party regular he voted later for Parker.

Campaign  
contribu-  
tions

Near the end of the campaign the Democratic candidate repeatedly and specifically charged that the Republicans were systematically canvassing the corporation and trust magnates of the country for large contributions. Three days before the election Roosevelt denounced the statements made by Parker as "unqualifiedly and atrociously false." The incident concentrated attention upon the subject and subsequent investigation made disclosures which brought about legislation designed to correct abuses of this character. The election resulted in the worst defeat sustained by the Democratic party since the Civil War, but the general lack of interest was shown by the fact that the total popular vote fell nearly a quarter of a million below that of 1900.

Republican  
platform  
of 1908

Roosevelt declined a renomination in 1908, but was able to dictate the selection of Taft as his successor. The Republican platform of that year offered little that was new. However, it declared unequivocally for a revision of the tariff by a special session of Congress to be held immediately following the inauguration of the next President. On the trust question it claimed credit for the Sherman Act, adding that it should be strengthened by "such amendments as will give to the federal government greater supervision and control over and secure greater publicity in the management of that class of corporations engaged in interstate commerce having power and opportunity to effect monopolies." By a large majority the Republican convention voted down propositions emanating from I. A. Follette's adherents in favor of publicity of campaign contributions, physical valuation of railroads, and direct election of Senators—all of which found a place later in the Democratic platform of that year. In his speech of ac-

ceptance, however, Taft declared himself in favor of these policies with certain reservations.

The Democratic party returned to its former allegiance in 1908 by nominating Bryan for the third time. Under his influence it accepted a plank on the trust question which, unlike many such pronouncements, was specific and detailed. It denounced private monopoly as indefensible and intolerable, demanded criminal prosecution of guilty trust magnates and officials, and proposed additional legislation which would make the existence of private monopoly impossible in the United States. Among such additional remedies it specified three: first, "a law preventing the duplication of directors among competing corporations"—*i.e.*, to prevent interlocking directorates; second, "a license system which will . . . make it necessary for a manufacturing or trading corporation engaged in interstate commerce to take out a federal license before it shall be permitted to control as much as twenty-five per cent of the product in which it deals, the license to protect the public from watered stock and to prohibit the control by such corporation of more than fifty per cent of the total amount of any product consumed in the United States"; and, third, "a law compelling such licensed corporations to sell to all purchasers in all parts of the country on the same terms, after making due allowance for cost of transportation." Once more, however, Bryan was defeated, but his party made a much better showing in the popular vote than it had done four years earlier.

Democratic  
trust plank,  
1908

At the beginning of Taft's administration the Republican party had been in full control of the federal government for twelve years.<sup>1</sup> It had decisively defeated the Democracy three times under the radical leadership of Bryan, and once, still more decisively, under the conservative leadership of Parker. Since its virtual absorption by the Bryan Democracy the old Populist party ceased to cast a vote of any considerable size in presidential elections.

Antagonism  
to the ma-  
chine

<sup>1</sup> See the interesting table presented by C. E. Merriam, *American Party System*, p. 81.

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Nevertheless, its spirit was still active in a number of states, as shown by the rapid progress made by the initiative and referendum since 1898. Somewhat later the recall was introduced in various Western cities and commonwealths. Beginning with 1903, direct-primary legislation spread rapidly, finding favor even in the East. A new spirit was abroad in the land, a spirit of antagonism to machine rule and in favor of popular power.

Growth of  
Socialist  
vote

Another evidence of political discontent was afforded by the growth of the Socialist vote. The Socialist-Labor party began its career in national politics by nominating candidates for the Presidency in 1892. Eight years later a fusion of more moderate Socialists was effected under the name of the Social-Democratic party, which was changed in 1901 to the Socialist party. The Socialist-Labor party refused to affiliate with the new movement, but its vote has remained negligible. On the other hand, the Socialists polled nearly a hundred thousand votes for their candidate, Eugene V. Debs, in 1900, and more than four hundred thousand in each of the two following national elections.

Republican  
schisms

In spite of its preponderant strength and apparent unity at the beginning of Taft's administration, the Republican party soon developed serious internal differences. Immediately after his inauguration the President, acting upon the platform pledge of 1908, called a special session of Congress to deal with the tariff. The result was the passage of the Payne-Aldrich Act, which aroused great popular resentment. President Taft's vigorous defense of this measure had the effect of unloading much of this resentment upon his own shoulders. His appointment of R. A. Ballinger as Secretary of the Interior earned the determined and persistent enmity of the leaders of the conservation movement to which President Roosevelt had given such enthusiastic support during his administration. President Taft's appointments to the new Court of Commerce and his selections for the five vacancies occurring on the bench of the Supreme Court also came in for much

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criticism. Although he pushed through the cases against the Standard Oil Company and the American Tobacco Company in the Supreme Court, securing orders for the dissolution of both these combinations, it became known that the inner circles behind them took advantage of the resulting readjustments to secure large profits.

The cumulative effects of these and other causes for dissatisfaction took the form of an "insurgent" movement among Republican members of Congress. In March, 1910, a combination of insurgent Republicans and Democrats in the House of Representatives made a concerted attack upon the Speaker, Joseph Cannon, who had been widely criticized because of his use of the great powers of his office in the interest of the "reactionary" element. The Speaker was ousted from his membership on the Rules Committee, it was increased in size, and made elective by the House itself, thus taking the power of appointing it out of the hands of the Speaker. In the November election following this upheaval the Democrats gained control of the House for the first time in sixteen years.

"Insurgents"  
of 1910

Opposition to the administration took concrete form in January, 1911, when the National Progressive Republican League was organized under the leadership of Senator La Follette of Wisconsin. Its program criticized the legislation recently enacted on the tariff, trusts, banking, and conservation, and declared in favor of direct primaries, direct legislation, and direct government generally. At the outset Roosevelt declined to join the new movement, but in his speeches and editorials he gradually aligned himself with its policies. Early in the campaign year 1912 he announced that "his hat was in the ring."

National  
Progressive  
Republican  
League

A bitter contest immediately broke out between Roosevelt and Taft for the control of delegates to the Republican national convention. By the exercise of administrative influence such as had often been employed in the past, the campaign managers of the latter were able to capture most of the delegates from Southern states where the Republican vote was practically negligible. On the other hand,

Roosevelt-  
Taft contest



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Roosevelt developed astounding strength in most of the states which had established the direct-primary system, and in which the Republican vote was large. Also his supporters started contests wherever possible.

Republican  
platform  
of 1912

Carried to the floor of the convention, the contests were decided in favor of Taft, whose friends were in control of the machinery. Roosevelt's supporters thereupon bolted, and the delegates who remained proceeded without further opposition to the nomination of Taft. The platform declared the Republican party to be "now, as always, a party of advanced and constructive statesmanship"; stated that it was prepared to go forward with various forms of social legislation, especially such as would improve the condition of the working classes; reaffirmed the protective-tariff doctrine of the party; characterized the recall of judges as unnecessary and unwise, but favored judicial reform that would make court processes less tedious and costly; and proposed the creation of a Federal Trade Commission and the enactment of legislation supplementary to the Anti-trust Act which would make its terms, particularly with regard to criminal offenses, clearer to the business world. Investigations were promised of the high cost of living and of agricultural credit methods.

Democratic  
convention  
of 1912

A few days later the Democratic national convention met at Baltimore. Encouraged by the party's victory in the congressional elections of 1910, and still more by the multiplying evidences of Republican disaffection, there was no dearth of presidential timber. The two most prominent aspirants were Speaker Champ Clark, who had developed considerable strength in the primary elections of a number of Middle Western states, and Governor Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey, who had put through a program of progressive legislation in that state which won him many ardent supporters throughout the country. Although not an avowed candidate, Bryan's influence was still potent. It was thrown in favor of Wilson and against Clark because the latter refused to join in a movement to prevent the choice of a conservative Democrat as tempo-



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rary chairman of the convention. At one time Clark actually secured a majority of the votes of the convention, but under the rules of the party a two-thirds vote was required for nomination. After a struggle lasting seven days, Wilson was finally victorious on the forty-sixth ballot.

The platform adopted at Baltimore declared that "the federal government under the Constitution has no right or power to impose or collect tariff duties except for the purpose of revenue." It charged that the excessive cost of living resulted in large measure from high tariff laws enacted by the Republican party, and from the trusts and commercial conspiracies fostered by such laws. The party's position of 1908 on monopolies and trusts was reaffirmed in somewhat more general terms. Further, it recommended a valuation of railroads, express companies, telegraph and telephone lines by the Interstate Commerce Commission. Labor organizations should not be regarded as illegal combinations in restraint of trade. Presidential primaries, the restriction of campaign contributions, and the prohibition of such contributions by corporations were also favored. At the instigation of Bryan, it was said, a resolution was adopted favoring a single presidential term, urging an amendment to the Constitution making the President ineligible for re-election, and pledging the candidate of the convention to this principle. There were also planks in favor of conservation of natural resources, development of waterways, investigation of agricultural-credit societies in foreign countries, and legislation to suppress "the pernicious practice of gambling in agricultural products by organized exchanges or others."

**Democratic  
platform  
of 1912**

Meanwhile Roosevelt's supporters were busily engaged in making arrangements for a Progressive national convention, which met in Chicago early in August. Among the delegates were eighteen women, some of whom took a prominent part in the proceedings. The platform adopted on this occasion was chiefly remarkable for the long and detailed list of industrial and social reforms

**Progressive  
convention  
and plat-  
form of 1912**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

which it contained. It also proposed a large number of political reforms, among them being direct primaries; presidential-preference primaries; the short ballot; initiative, referendum, and recall in the states; popular recall of judicial decisions denying the constitutionality under a state constitution of acts passed under the police power; an easier method of amending the federal Constitution; and equal suffrage for men and women. While affirming belief in the principle of protection, the tariff plank of the Progressive platform condemned the Payne-Aldrich Act, and favored a nonpartisan, scientific tariff commission, and the immediate downward revision of those schedules wherein duties are shown to be unjust or excessive. For the regulation of trusts a strong administrative commission was urged to enforce complete publicity, and to attack unfair competition, false capitalization, and special privilege. Valuation of the physical property of railroads and the abolition of the Court of Commerce were also included. Roosevelt was unanimously nominated for the Presidency on the first ballot.

Election of  
1912

In the ensuing election the Democrats carried every state except eight, six of which gave their electoral votes to Roosevelt,<sup>1</sup> and two to Taft. The popular vote of the former exceeded that of the latter by more than six hundred thousand, but the two combined fell short of the vote for Taft in 1908. Owing to the division of the opposition, Wilson's majority in the electoral college was enormous, but his popular vote was only 40 per cent of the total. One of the greatest surprises of the election was the vote of the two Socialist parties, which leaped from 434,618 in 1908, to 931,132 in 1912.

## BOOK NOTES

MANY of the historical works listed under Book Notes to the preceding chapter deal with party development

<sup>1</sup> Including California, the electoral vote of which was divided, eleven for the Progressives and two for the Democrats.

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since the Civil War, as shown by their titles or by the dates indicating the period covered. Especially worthy of repeated mention in this connection are the treatises by H. J. Ford and E. Stanwood, which are as valuable for the *post bellum* as for the *ante bellum* development of political parties. F. E. Haynes, *Third Party Movements* (1916), is a history of third-party movements in the United States since the Civil War, dealing with the Liberal Republicans, the Farmers' Movement of the 'seventies, the Greenback, Populist, and Progressive parties. Although written with special reference to Iowa, the latter state was so often the center of third-party agitation that the work is more national than provincial in scope. The first edition of P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics* (1913), presents the Democratic and Republican platforms of 1912 in parallel-column arrangement. Campaign text-books issued by the various parties for 1912 and earlier presidential years are the most valuable official sources for platforms and popular arguments based thereon. A very convenient compilation of vest-pocket size, prepared by G. D. Ellis under the direction of W. T. Page, clerk of the U. S. House of Representatives, and issued as a public document, contains the *Platforms of the Two Great Parties, 1856-1920, inclusive* (1920).

The only comprehensive work of an historical character which deals with this period in completed form is J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850* (7 vols., 1893-1906), covering the years 1850 to 1877, to which has been added by the same author a one-volume *History of the United States from Hayes to McKinley, 1877-1896* (1920). On a similar imposing scale E. P. Oberholtzer has begun a *History of the United States Since the Civil War*, in five volumes, two of which have already been issued (1917, 1921), bringing the narrative down to 1872.

Briefer historical works dealing with this period are as follows: J. W. Burgess, *Reconstruction and the Con-*

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stitution (1902); W. A. Dunning, *Reconstruction, Political and Economic* (1907); P. L. Haworth, *Reconstruction and Union* (1912); H. A. Herbert, editor, *Why the Solid South* (1890); E. B. Andrews, *History of the Last Quarter Century in the United States, 1870-1895* (2 vols., 1897); H. T. Peck, *Twenty Years of the Republic* (1906); C. A. Beard, *Contemporary American History, 1877-1913* (1914); P. L. Haworth, *The United States in Our Own Times, 1865-1920* (1920); C. R. Lingley, *Since the Civil War* (1921); W. Wilson, *Division and Reunion*, with additional chapters by E. S. Corwin, bringing the narrative down to 1918 (1921); F. L. Paxon, *The New Nation, 1865-1920* (1921); H. J. Ford, *The Cleveland Era* (1921); D. R. Dewey, *National Problems, 1885-1897* (1907); H. Howland, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Times* (1921); S. J. Duncan-Clark, *The Progressive Movement, 1913-1921*; C. Seymour, *Woodrow Wilson and the World War* (1921).

The biographical works cited in Book Notes under Ch. I afford many interesting side lights on the campaigns in which McKinley, Bryan, Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, and others of that era figured. Students should be required to compare the platform pronouncements of the various parties on economic issues with the conclusions reached by standard text-book writers such as Ely, Seligman, Taussig, Fetter, Seager, Johnson, and Carver.

## CHAPTER VI

### CAMPAIGNS AND ISSUES OF 1916 AND 1920

DURING the first year of Wilson's administration two legislative measures of prime importance were placed upon the statute book. One of these was the Underwood Act revising the tariff downward and imposing an income tax; the other was the Federal Reserve Act which reorganized the banking system of the country. In 1914 the trust problem was dealt with by the establishment of a Federal Trade Commission and the enactment of the Clayton anti-trust law. Mexican conditions, which had long been threatening, took an acute turn in the latter year, with the result that Vera Cruz was seized by an American naval expedition and held until the downfall of Huerta. The outbreak of the World War in 1914 brought to an end, temporarily, at least, the predominance in our politics of domestic economic issues. With the development of the bloody struggle in Europe the attention of our people was concentrated more and more upon the policies of the belligerents, the maintenance of our own neutrality, the safety of American life and property upon the high seas, the manufacture and export of munitions, and, in case intervention should become necessary, the proper measures of military and naval preparedness. To understand the rather indecisive attitude of both parties upon these issues in the campaign of 1916, it should be borne in mind that Germany did not inaugurate her policy of unrestricted submarine warfare until February of the following year.

In spite of the bitterness engendered by the schism of 1912, the great majority of Progressives who were formerly Republicans had returned to the latter party before

Wilson ad-  
ministration

Conventions  
of 1916



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1916. Nevertheless, a convention of Progressives was called to meet in Chicago at the same time as the regular Republican convention of the latter year. Roosevelt was nominated for the Presidency by the former body, but he declined conditionally at the time and later threw his support to the Republican candidates. The names both of Roosevelt and Taft were presented at the regular Republican convention, but neither had any considerable following, and on the third ballot the nomination went to Charles E. Hughes, at the time one of the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. For the Vice-Presidency Charles W. Fairbanks was nominated. A few days later the Democratic convention renominated President Wilson and Vice-President Marshall by acclamation.

Aside from planks due to the Mexican trouble and the European War the most striking innovation in the platforms of 1916 was the acceptance by both parties of resolutions in favor of woman suffrage. This innovation was perhaps not entirely disconnected from the fact that by state action the suffrage movement had progressed so far that the women of twelve states were qualified to participate in the approaching presidential election. On this subject the Democratic plank read: "We recommend the extension of the franchise to the women of the country by the states upon the same terms as to men." The Republican platform stated its position as follows: "The Republican party, reaffirming its faith in government of the people, by the people, for the people, as a measure of justice to one half the adult people of the country, favors the extension of suffrage to women, but recognizes the right of each state to settle this question for itself." Shortly after the adjournment of the Republican convention, Hughes took ground in advance of his party by announcing himself in favor of a suffrage amendment to the federal Constitution. As a result he received the support of the National Woman's party, representing the more militant wing of the movement, which made a vigorous campaign for him in the suffrage states, apparently, however, with-

Woman-  
suffrage  
planks



## CAMPAIGNS OF 1916 AND 1920

out much success since ten out of the twelve gave their electoral votes to Wilson.

In its platform the Republican party assured the people of Mexico that it deeply sympathized with their sufferings at the hands of armed bands of desperadoes, and expressed horror and indignation at the outrages perpetrated upon American citizens by these bandits. It denounced "the indefensible methods of interference employed by the administration in the internal affairs of Mexico." Further, it criticized the administration, first, for its failure to act promptly and firmly, and, second, for its recognition of one of the factions responsible for these outrages. Finally the party pledged its aid to restore order in Mexico, and promised our citizens on the border and in Mexico "adequate and absolute protection in their lives, liberty, and property."

**Republican  
platform on  
Mexico**

The Democratic platform characterized Mexican conditions in much the same way as the Republican had done, but justified fully the course pursued by the President. "Intervention," it added, "implying, as it does, military subjugation, is revolting to the people of the United States, notwithstanding the provocation to that course has been great and should be resorted to, if at all, only as a last recourse." Both parties reaffirmed their devotion to the Monroe Doctrine, the Republicans declaring it essential to the achievement of the manifest destiny of the country; the Democrats pointing out that it implied the most scrupulous regard upon our part for the sovereignty of the other independent republics of the two Americas.

**Democratic  
platform on  
Mexico**

With regard to foreign relations the Republicans expressed a desire for "a peace of justice and right," and "a straight and honest neutrality," neither of which, they said, in words obviously meant to reflect upon President Wilson's policies, could be preserved "by shifty expedients, by phrase making, by performances in language, or by attitudes ever changing in an effort to secure groups of voters." Further, they expressed a belief in a "firm, consistent, and courageous foreign policy," and in "the pacific

**Republican  
platform on  
foreign re-  
lations**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

settlement of international disputes," recommending the establishment of a world court for the latter purpose.

Democratic  
platform on  
foreign re-  
lations

The Democratic platform, on the other hand, commended "the splendid diplomatic victories of our great President, who has preserved the vital interests of our government and its citizens, and kept us out of war." During the campaign this last phrase in particular played a great part in popular discussion, and doubtless decided the casting of many votes both for and against the Democratic nominees. Continuing on the subject of foreign relations, the platform held that the United States should use its power not only to make itself safe at home and secure abroad, but also to assist the world in securing settled peace and justice. Every people has the right to choose the sovereignty under which it shall live, small states should enjoy the same respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity as great and powerful nations, and the world has a right to be free from every disturbance of its peace originating in aggression or in disregard of the rights of peoples and nations. "We believe that the time has come when it is the duty of the United States to join with other nations of the world in any feasible association that will effectively serve these principles." Finally, the Democratic platform contained several paragraphs which, while recognizing frankly the loyalty of the great mass of our foreign-born population, severely condemned the limited number among them who sought to advance the interests of a foreign power by crippling or destroying our industries or by intimidating the government, a political party, or representatives of the people.

Prepared-  
ness

"In order to maintain our peace," the Republican platform declared, "we must have a sufficient and effective regular army and a provision for ample reserves, already drilled and disciplined"; also "a navy strong and so well proportioned and equipped, so thoroughly ready and prepared, that no enemy can gain command of the sea and effect a landing in force on either our western or our eastern coast." Professing a similar devotion to peace and

## CAMPAIGNS OF 1916 AND 1920

denying any desire for additional territory or for any advantage which cannot be peacefully gained, the Democrats favored the maintenance of an army fully adequate to the requirements of order, safety, and national protection; the fullest development of modern methods of seacoast defense; an adequate reserve of citizens trained to arms; and a fixed policy for the continuous development of a navy equal to the international tasks which the United States hopes to perform.

The Democrats unreservedly indorsed the Underwood Tariff law; the Republicans pronounced it a complete failure which, "but for the adventitious conditions created by the war, would long since have paralyzed all forms of American industry and deprived American labor of its just reward." With regard to the Philippines the Democrats reiterated their indorsement of ultimate independence for the islands; the Republicans condemned the Democratic administration for its attempt to abandon the islands. In general the Republicans strongly criticized, while the Democrats just as strongly approved, the policies of the administration regarding trust regulation, rural credits, government ownership of merchant vessels, and transportation. It was noteworthy, however, that the Republican platform made no mention either of the income tax or of the Federal Reserve Act. Both platforms presented brief programs of industrial and social legislation.

**Tariff and  
other issues**

Late in the campaign of 1916 a new issue was injected by the passage, under pressure from the administration, of the Adamson law. It provided that railway trainmen should be paid overtime on the basis of an eight-hour working day instead of the ten-hour day then customary. The law was bitterly denounced by the Republicans as unconstitutional. Both the President and Congress were accused of having surrendered weakly to compulsion exercised by the railroad unions in a servile attempt to secure the labor vote. On the other hand, the Democrats approved the measure as a thoroughly fair and statesman-

**Adamson  
Act**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

like solution of a difficult problem which had saved the country from the horrors of a general railroad strike.

Election of  
1916

The election of 1916 was exceedingly close, the decision being in doubt for several days while returns were coming in from the rural districts of a number of Western states. Hughes carried all of New England except New Hampshire; all the Middle Atlantic states, including Delaware; all the Middle Western states except Ohio; and in addition West Virginia, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Oregon, his total electoral vote being 254. With the exceptions named above Wilson carried every state south of Mason and Dixon's line and every state west of the Mississippi, besides breaking the Republican stronghold in the North and East by capturing Ohio and New Hampshire. His total vote in the electoral college was 277. The popular vote for Wilson was 9,129,269; for Hughes, 8,547,328. For the two Socialist tickets the total popular vote was only 604,759—a decline of over three hundred thousand as compared with 1912.

Declaration  
of war,  
1917

With the declaration of war by Congress, April 6, 1917, active partisan opposition to the major policies of the administration ceased for a time. A large number of men not connected with the party in power were called into the public service, including several Republicans of prominence. There was some advocacy of a coalition Cabinet, such as had been formed in several of the European belligerent countries, on the ground that it would avoid partisan criticism and struggle and thus strengthen the hands of the government in the conduct of the war. Opponents of this proposal, which was not adopted, urged that power was already concentrated sufficiently in the executive, and that our constitutional and party systems differed so widely from those of European countries as to make the innovation unnecessary or even harmful.

"Politics is  
adjourned"

This tacit, if somewhat limited, party truce lasted well into 1918. The Socialists alone had taken a definite stand against the war in their St. Louis platform, but they had

## CAMPAIGNS OF 1916 AND 1920

only one member in Congress. On the whole President Wilson was justified in his laconic utterance, made as the summer of 1918 approached, that "Politics is adjourned." There were, however, wide differences of opinion regarding the conduct and purposes of the war among the leaders of both parties, which, of course, found critical utterance chiefly on the Republican side. Roosevelt denounced the President's fourteen points as thoroughly mischievous, and a number of his party colleagues condemned roundly the various notes sent to the German government. "The Republican leaders indicated their belief that the war was to be won not through diplomatic appeals to the German people to overthrow their masters, but through the use solely of military force."<sup>1</sup>

Absorbed in the stirring events amid which the World War was being brought to a close, the public gave little attention to the congressional elections of 1918. On October 24th, however, President Wilson made an appeal for the return of a Democratic majority to both the Senate and the House of Representatives. "This is no time," he urged, "either for divided counsel or for divided leadership. Unity of command is as necessary now in civil action as it is upon the battlefield. If the control of the House and Senate should be taken away from the party now in power, an opposing majority could assume control of legislation and oblige all action to be taken amid contest and obstruction. The return of a Republican majority to either House of the Congress would, moreover, be interpreted on the other side of the water as a repudiation of my leadership." In the few days remaining before the election Republican leaders protested vigorously against the President's appeal as inconsistent with his former attitude, as revealing his purpose to assume personally powers of dangerous extent, and as reflecting unworthily upon the motives of their party. In the ensuing election they

Wilson's ap-  
peal for a  
Democratic  
House,  
1918

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Mathews, "Political Parties and the War," in *American Political Science Review*, vol. xiii, p. 225 (May, 1919).



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

gained control of the Senate by a plurality of one, and of the House by forty-six votes.<sup>1</sup>

### League of Nations

Upon the return of the President from Paris with the peace treaty including the League of Nations, fresh fuel was added to the flames of party controversy. While there were differences of opinion in both parties regarding these subjects, the Republicans furnished the bulk of those Senators who as "bitter-enders" opposed the treaty as a whole and those who proposed major amendments to the League of Nations, while the Democrats supplied most of those Senators who supported the treaty either without change or with interpretative amendments only. The controversy was taken to the people by the President himself and by various senatorial leaders on both sides. With the failure of the Senate to approve the treaty it became apparent that the whole controversy would become the paramount issue of the presidential campaign in 1920.

### Domestic issues

Meanwhile various domestic issues, more or less submerged during the war, began to thrust themselves forward. There was grave industrial unrest, aggravated by the extremely high cost of living and made manifest by decreasing productivity and by strikes in basic industries, such as steel, coal, and transportation. The adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors, and the subsequent enactment of the Volstead Act, which defined intoxicating liquors as those containing one half of one per cent or more of alcohol by volume, stirred anew the ancient conflict in both parties between the "wets" and the "drys." Within eleven months from the passage by Congress on June 11, 1919, of the federal suffrage amendment enfranchising women, thirty-five state legislatures had ratified,

<sup>1</sup> In the Sixty-fifth Congress, party divisions were as follows: Senate—Democrats, 53, Republicans, 42; House—Democrats, 216, Republicans, 210, Progressives, 2, Prohibitionist, 1, Socialist, 1, Independents, 2. In the Sixty-sixth Congress, elected in November, 1918, they were as follows: Senate—Republicans, 48, Democrats, 47, Republican and Progressive, 1; House—Republicans, 237, Democrats, 191, Independent, 1, Independent Republican, 1, Prohibitionist, 1.



## CAMPAIGNS OF 1916 AND 1920

leaving only one more to be obtained, and thus naturally strengthening the pressure put upon both parties to secure final action.

On the Republican side the principal candidates for the presidential nomination were General Leonard Wood, Governor Frank O. Lowden of Illinois, Senator Hiram Johnson of California, and Senator W. G. Harding of Ohio. Among the Democratic leaders the most prominently mentioned possibilities were W. G. McAdoo, former Secretary of the Treasury; A. Mitchell Palmer, Attorney-General, and Governor James M. Cox of Ohio. Herbert Hoover, who unquestionably commanded a large and enthusiastic following in both camps, announced his adherence to the Republican party early in the campaign year, but failed to secure more than a minimum of support in the convention. At the close of the primary campaign the Kenyon senatorial committee was appointed to investigate alleged large campaign contributions and expenditures, the revelations made by which reflected upon a number of candidates, and severely damaged, if they did not render hopeless, the chances of at least two of the Republican aspirants.<sup>1</sup>

**Candidates  
of 1920**

The Republican national convention was held at Chicago, June 8th to 12th.<sup>2</sup> On the first ballot, taken Friday, June 11th, General Wood led by 287½ votes; Governor Lowden was second with 211½; Senator Johnson third with 133½; and Senator Harding fourth with 65½. With the exception of Senator Harding all these made gains during the day, especially Governor Lowden. On the first ballot of Saturday—the fifth taken by the convention—the latter succeeded in overtopping General Wood by four votes. The convention seemed to be facing

**Republican  
convention**

<sup>1</sup> For details of the Kenyon report see chap. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> On the Republican national convention of 1920, see W. Lippman, "Chicago, 1920," *New Republic*, vol. xxiii, p. 108 (June 23, 1920); F. M. Davenport, "Conservative America in Convention Assembled," *Outlook*, vol. cxxv, p. 375 (June 23, 1920); and A. W. Page, "The Meaning of What Happened at Chicago," *World's Work*, vol. xi, pp. 361-377 (August, 1920).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

a deadlock between these two, who led a neck-and-neck race on the sixth and seventh ballots, with the delegates sweltering in tropical heat and oppressed by forebodings of rapidly mounting hotel bills. Under these untoward circumstances the action of party leaders who began throwing support behind Senator Harding soon brought results. On the seventh ballot he first received more than one hundred votes; on the eighth and ninth ballots the followings of General Wood and Governor Lowden began to disintegrate; and on the tenth ballot Senator Harding was nominated with 692 votes.

### Democratic convention

At the Democratic convention, held in San Francisco, June 28th to July 6th, a deadlock actually occurred between the leading three candidates.<sup>1</sup> On the first ballot, taken Friday, July 2d, McAdoo led with 266 votes, Palmer receiving 256, and Cox 134. McAdoo continued in the lead until the eleventh ballot, when Cox passed him, retaining his advantage to the end of that day, Saturday, July 3d. The convention was forced to adjourn over Sunday, but with temperatures and hotel bills both considerably lower than at Chicago, there was a general determination among the delegates to take all the time that might be necessary to fight it out. On Monday, July 5th, Governor Cox maintained his lead until the twenty-ninth ballot, but from the thirtieth to the thirty-eighth the advantage passed again to McAdoo. The vote of Palmer also fluctuated, reaching its maximum on the seventh, twenty-third, and again on the thirty-sixth ballots. It seemed evident that no decision could be hoped for within reasonable limits of time, especially in view of the two-thirds rule prevailing in Democratic conventions, so long as these three contestants remained in the field. Following the thirty-eighth ballot Palmer released his followers. In the resulting break-up Cox made the greater gains, and finally in the

<sup>1</sup> On the Democratic national convention of 1920, see B. Bliven, "San Francisco," *New Republic*, vol. xxiii, p. 196 (July 14, 1920); also unsigned article in the *Outlook*, vol. cxxv, p. 487 (July 14, 1920).

## CAMPAIGNS OF 1916 AND 1920

small hours of Tuesday morning was successful on the forty-fourth ballot, with 701½ votes.

At Chicago the draft of the platform as submitted by the Resolutions Committee was accepted by acclamation without a single amendment, after a minority report presented by one member of the committee had been voted down.<sup>1</sup> The document which thus became the official program of the party is a lengthy one, running to something over six thousand words. It consists of a short introduction containing a tribute to the Constitution, several paragraphs denouncing the Democratic administration with particular reference to its conduct of foreign relations, a somewhat briefer section praising the achievements of the Republican Congress, followed by the body of the platform presenting planks on economic issues, social, political, and administrative reforms; concluding with a paragraph summing up the proposed policies of the party.

Republican  
platform

Upon the submission of the report of its Resolutions Committee the San Francisco convention was enlivened by a furious oratorical battle lasting nine hours. The fight was led by Bryan, who presented five proposed amendments to the platform, the most important of which was a "bone-dry" plank. After this had been rejected by a vote of nearly six to one, the convention also rejected by a vote of two to one a light-wine and beer plank offered by W. Bourke Cockran. Planks proposing the recognition of the Irish Republic and providing for the appointment of a commission to study the question of fair and just compensation for ex-service men also failed on the floor of the convention. In length the Democratic platform of 1920 yields nothing to that of the Republicans. Beginning with a note of greeting to the President and of pride in the achievements of the administration under his leadership, it introduces at once the League of Nations plank. Other paragraphs follow dealing with the conduct of the war and

Democratic  
platform

<sup>1</sup> Among other proposals this minority report, offered by E. J. Gross of Wisconsin, provided for the flat rejection of the League of Nations, and for government ownership of railroads, stockyards, etc.

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the financial achievements of the administration. The body of the platform contains planks dealing with a large number of economic and other reforms, and in conclusion an appeal is made on the basis of the party's record.

League of  
Nations  
issue

In the Appendix the 1920 platforms of both parties will be found in full, presented according to a logical arrangement of subject-matter in parallel columns.<sup>1</sup> During the campaign the League of Nations issue was undoubtedly paramount so far as public discussion was concerned. The Democratic platform favored the League "as the surest, if not the only practicable, means of maintaining the permanent peace of the world and terminating the insufferable burden of great military and naval establishments," it felicitated the President and his associates on their exceptional achievements at Paris, condemned the Republican Senate "for its refusal to ratify the treaty merely because it was the product of Democratic statesmanship," and quoted Senator Lodge's earlier denunciation of a separate peace with Germany as an action that would brand us with "everlasting dishonor." In the Republican convention it was known that there was the sharpest possible difference of opinion regarding the League of Nations. Johnson, Borah, McCormick and other irreconcilables opposed the treaty in any form. Others favored its acceptance with reservations of various kinds. Rumors of a bolt on this issue were rife prior to and during the Chicago convention. Nevertheless, after forty-eight hours of deliberation the Committee on Resolutions succeeded in evolving a formula which was accepted enthusiastically by the convention. Instead of *the* League of Nations it favored *an* international association—a distinction so much insisted upon later that it led to the remark that the campaign of 1920 was a contest between the definite and indefinite articles. The international association desired by the Republicans was to be based on justice, it was to provide methods to maintain the rule of public right by the development of law and the decision

<sup>1</sup> In later editions of this book the platforms of 1924 will be presented.

## CAMPAIGNS OF 1916 AND 1920

of impartial courts, and finally it was to secure instant and general international conference whenever peace shall be threatened. All this was to be done without the compromise of our national independence. According to the Republican platform the covenant signed by the President at Paris signally failed in the latter respect and "contains stipulations certain to produce the injustice, hostility, and controversy among nations which it proposes to prevent."

It is undeniable that the Republican plank on the League of Nations was interpreted by leaders and orators of that party with great latitude during the campaign. Irreconcilables announced it to mean isolation pure and simple. On August 28th Senator Harding said: "If the League has been so entwined and interwoven into the peace of Europe that its good must be preserved in order to stabilize the peace of that continent, then it may be amended or revised"; on September 5th, "We are all agreed now that amendment or revision and reconstruction is better than reservations." Later, however, at Des Moines he declared himself "against the proposed League," and said, "I do not want to clarify these obligations; I want to turn my back on them; it is not interpretation but rejection I am seeking."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, thirty-one prominent citizens, including such well-known Republican leaders as Root, Hughes, Hoover, and Wickersham, together with a number of college presidents headed by Lowell of Harvard, signed a statement given to the press on October 15th, in which they said in part: "We have reached the conclusion that the true course to bring America into an effective league to preserve peace is not by insisting with Mr. Cox upon the acceptance of such a provision as Article X, thus prolonging the unfortunate situation created by Mr. Wilson's insistence upon that article, but by frankly calling upon the other nations to agree to changes in the proposed agreement which will obviate this vital objection and other objections less the subject of dispute. For this course we can look only to the Republican party and its

League of Nations in the campaign

<sup>1</sup> "The League Issue," *Nation*, vol. cxi, p. 438 (Oct. 20, 1920).



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candidate; the Democratic party and Mr. Cox are not bound to follow it. The Republican party is bound by every consideration of good faith to pursue such a course until the desired object is attained." In support of this conclusion the thirty-one signers quoted Harding's speech of August 28th, in which he said, "I would take and combine all that is good and excise all that is bad from both organizations"—i.e., the Court and the League.

Other influences affecting voters

While the League of Nations issue occupied the center of the stage so far as public discussion was concerned, there can be no doubt that large masses of voters were influenced in 1920 to a greater degree perhaps than is usual in campaigns by their immediate preoccupations, particularly by irritation over war burdens and war taxes, the high cost of living, strained relations between capital and labor, the housing shortage, coal scarcity, and transportation difficulties. Citizens of foreign extraction were also swayed to a larger degree than ever before by national antipathies brought with them from Europe and now greatly exacerbated by the war.

The vote in 1920

The result of the election was a landslide for the Republican candidates, who received the enormous plurality of seven million votes, 16,152,200 being cast for Harding and Coolidge as compared with 9,147,353 for Cox and Roosevelt. Harding carried all the states in the Union except Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Texas and Virginia. For the first time in a generation the "solid South" was broken, Tennessee shifting to the Republican column with a majority of 13,000. In the electoral college Harding and Coolidge received 304; Cox and Roosevelt, 127 votes.

### BOOK NOTES

FOR the attitudes of the two major parties before the people the \* *Campaign Text Book* of the Republican party (1916, 1920), and the \* *Democratic Text Book* for the same years are the best official sources. The second edition



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of P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics* (1917), presents the Democratic and Republican platforms of 1916 in parallel-column arrangement; and the latest edition of E. Stanwood, *History of the Presidency* (1916), contains an appendix dealing with the conventions, candidates, and platforms of that year. The incidents of these struggles are too recent for historical appraisal, nevertheless they have been analyzed as carefully as may be at this time by W. E. Dodd, *Woodrow Wilson and His Work* (2d ed., 1921). For contemporary accounts the student should consult the extensive periodical literature on the subject, the more available examples of which have been quoted in footnotes; also the issues of the *American Year Book* and the *Political Science Quarterly*, the latter of which carries in its annual supplement an excellently edited record of political events. Unofficial election statistics for the country as a whole may be found in the annual almanacs published by several metropolitan newspapers, the most extensive perhaps being presented by the *World Almanac* for 1917 and subsequent years.

## CHAPTER VII

### MINOR PARTIES AND THEIR PLATFORMS IN 1920

Strength of  
the two-  
party system

THE strength of the two-party system in American politics is beyond question. In our national history as a whole periods of party disintegration have been few in number and of brief duration. Thus the fourfold division of the old Democratic-Republican party in 1824 was followed in the next presidential election by a clear-cut conflict between Democrats and Whigs. In 1856 the Whigs, and in 1860 the Democrats, went to pieces over the slavery issue, but before the Civil War had come to an end the struggle between Democrats and Republicans was renewed and has continued down to the present time. In only one election since the Civil War—that of 1912—has there been the remotest likelihood of the success of any presidential candidate aside from the nominees of the two major parties. With the exception of that year the combined vote of all minor parties has exceeded 10 per cent of the total popular vote for the Presidency on but one occasion.<sup>1</sup> In the latest presidential election (1920) it amounted to less than 6 per cent.

Influence of  
minor parties

It by no means follows, however, that minor parties are altogether impotent in our politics, or that their influence is to be gauged solely by the small fraction of the total vote which they poll. The greatest success recorded to

<sup>1</sup> In the presidential election of 1892, which marked the zenith of the power of the Populist party, it polled a popular vote of 1,041,028. The Prohibitionists also reached their maximum on this occasion with a vote of 264,133. The only other minor party in the field was the Socialist-Labor party, for which 21,164 ballots were cast, making a total vote for the three of 1,326,325. Each of the major parties cast over five million votes, the total popular vote of all parties being 12,059,351. For detailed statistics regarding strength of third parties see C. E. Merriam, *American Party System*, p. 92.

their credit was that of the Liberty and Free Soil parties from 1840 to 1856, which led to the disappearance of the Whigs and the establishment of the present Republican party. Unquestionably this historic precedent has greatly encouraged subsequent third-party movements, although none of them has equaled it. Nevertheless, as we have already noted, the Greenback and Populist movement led to the capture of the Democratic party in 1896, while the Progressive movement split the Republican party in 1912. Although never controlling as much as two and one-half per cent of the total popular vote in a presidential election, the Prohibitionists aided by nonparty organizations have seen their fundamental principle written into the Constitution of the United States. For a number of years now both of the major parties have not hesitated, on occasion, to steal various minor planks from the platform of the Socialist party. Taking our political history as a whole, therefore, the predominance of the two-party system is beyond question, but it is a predominance tempered to a degree by the presence and activities of minor parties.

Can one  
"throw his  
vote away?"

Considering the impressive achievements of third-party movements in American politics, it is impossible to agree altogether with the frequently expressed opinion that anyone who votes the ticket of such a party "throws his vote away." The elector who chooses this course does indeed give up the opportunity to make his ballot count directly in favor of either of the candidates of the major parties, one of whom is virtually certain to be successful. On the other hand, the transfer of votes from major to minor parties may indirectly affect the strength of the former very materially, especially when the contest is close. Among the various explanations offered for the defeat of Blaine in 1884 was the unexpectedly large Prohibition vote in New York, supposed to have been recruited chiefly from Republican ranks, thus enabling Cleveland to carry the state by a narrow margin and win the election. In so far as an elector's purpose is to secure some advantage for himself, as, *e.g.*, patronage or other governmental favors,

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he does, of course, throw his vote away when he casts it for a third party. Such parties have no governmental favors to bestow, except on the rare occasions when they enter into a bargain with the dominant party. If, however, the voter's purpose is to indicate the proper course to be pursued in deciding questions of public policy—and this is assumed to be the real and higher purpose of the great mass of voters of all parties—it is evident that a minor party ballot may be as effective, and in the long run perhaps even more effective, than a ballot for one of the major parties.

### TWO-PARTY *versus* MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM

#### Multi-party system

The people of the United States are so thoroughly used to the two-party system that they are inclined to accept it as a matter of course. Taking the more highly developed countries of the world as a whole, however, it is the exception rather than the rule. In English politics the two-party system has also prevailed, although there are indications at present that it may break up. In the countries of continental Europe, on the other hand, party divisions are more numerous. As a rule, four, five, or more parties contend for power in each of these countries.

#### Criticism of the two-party system

Political theorists and adherents of minority parties frequently criticize the existing two-party system of the United States and advocate the adoption of a multi-party system in its place. From time to time the formation of a new party or parties of some definite character is proposed in the hope of bringing about a division of the strength of the old political organizations such that three or more groups may contest our elections on fairly even terms. The chief argument upon which critics of our present system rely is that the two major parties differ very slightly in essentials and not at all in nonessentials. Being so nicely balanced in voting strength and containing so many divergent groups within their ranks, they fight shy of definite pronouncements on matters of policy, preferring instead every possible form of compromise, postponement, and

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evasion. The certainty that power will be conferred upon one or the other of them at each election attracts into their ranks great numbers of place hunters and privilege seekers who care everything for patronage and profits, nothing for principles or policies. As a consequence the whole tone of our public life is lowered, progress is halted, inefficiency and corruption occur on a great scale, and the conscientious citizen, unable to find means for giving expression to his convictions, turns from politics in apathy or disgust.

It is undeniable that there is considerable truth in this indictment. Certain of the points which it contains are, however, open to question, nor should it be forgotten that the multi-party system itself suffers from grave defects. A study of party history will make it clear that in a number of our recent presidential campaigns there were comparatively few and slight differences even on major issues between the platforms of the two great parties, although this was certainly not the case either in 1896, 1912 or in 1920. In spite of the general agreement in their programs, when this condition occurs it would seem that substantial grounds for a choice between the two parties might be discovered in their past records, in the character of their candidates and leaders, and in the nature and purposes of the interests supporting them.

Even when the platforms of our two major parties reveal a large measure of agreement this condition by no means proves that they are fighting a sham battle, intent only on the spoils of victory. Nor does it prove that both parties are dominated by a single interest, as, *e.g.*, the capitalist class, the liquor traffic, or a bipartisan machine. Professor Munro has pointed out that the two great parties naturally seek to present issues that are both practical and popular, turning aside from issues which are popular but not practical, or which are practical but not popular.<sup>1</sup> A tremendous amount of shrewd judgment and understanding of the popular will goes into the making of the platforms of our major parties. If, then, they show sub-

Lack of sharply defined issues under two-party system

Alleged sham battles for spoils only

<sup>1</sup> *Government of the United States*, p. 329.



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stantial agreement on certain issues, it may be inferred that the great mass of the people, regardless of party affiliations, have reached a general consensus of opinion on these issues.

Two-party  
system indi-  
cates politi-  
cal stability

Lovers of heated party controversies and of public debate will, of course, find such a situation supremely dull. It may even be criticized as an evidence that parties have not properly aroused the people to more "burning" issues, or that the people themselves are politically dull or immature. On the other hand, such a condition clearly indicates the presence of a high degree of political stability, and, correspondingly, the absence of any serious or revolutionary unrest. Finally, if such static periods should last too long, our experience in the past shows that new currents of public opinion may readily find a channel for themselves through minor parties or party revolts.

Evils of  
patronage  
and corrup-  
tion under  
both sys-  
tems

Place hunting and political corruption are by no means unknown in countries having the multi-party system. The experience of Great Britain under civil-service reform shows that office-seeking may virtually be eliminated without affecting the strength of the two-party system. At the lowest estimate there are five or six political parties in France, but this has not prevented a number of grave scandals reflecting upon the integrity of some of the leading public men of the Third Republic. The multi-party system is, therefore, not a panacea for the graver ills that occur under the two-party system.

Presidential  
elections  
under multi-  
party system

If three or more parties of substantially equal popular strength and geographic extent were formed in the United States one result would be the throwing of presidential elections into the House of Representatives. Our experience on the two occasions when this did occur (1800, 1824) shows what unsatisfactory and possibly dangerous consequences might result. On the second of these occasions, it will be recalled, a decision was rendered against the candidate having the largest popular and electoral vote. Of course this difficulty could be removed by a constitutional amendment making a plurality in the electoral

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college sufficient to elect. But Presidents chosen in this manner would certainly be attacked as "minority Presidents," and in the long run this could hardly fail to diminish the prestige of the executive authority. This taunt was persistently employed against Wilson during the whole of his first term. Although he had a majority of the electoral vote in 1912, he received a plurality only of the popular vote in the three-cornered campaign of that year. As a matter of fact, the same taunt could have been used with greater or less effect against Hayes, Garfield, Cleveland (both terms), Harrison, and Wilson (second term), to mention only those instances that have occurred since the Civil War.

One of the arguments most commonly advanced in favor of the two-party system is that, no matter which party is in power, the government of the day in all its branches enjoys the support of a majority of the people. Under the parliamentary system of Great Britain this result is actually secured as a general rule. On the other hand, under our system of concurrent powers, checking and balancing each other, it frequently happens that a President chosen by one party has to face a majority chosen by the opposing party in one or both branches of Congress.

Majority  
rule under  
two-party  
system

In countries which have the multi-party system it is necessary to secure a majority in parliament to pass legislation and usually also to support the ministry. This is done by coalitions of two or more parties. The resultant "bloc" may be more or less permanent, but it always lacks the unity of a single majority party. To make headway against the "bloc" other parties are forced to unite in an "anti-bloc." In other words, no matter how many parties compete for power in popular elections they find it necessary to form two combinations afterward for the further prosecution of the political struggle. Such combinations cannot be formed without a considerable amount of bargaining and intrigue on the part of those entering into them. Undoubtedly party principles are sometimes abandoned or compromised at such times in the hope of forming

"Bloc" and  
"anti-bloc"

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a successful "bloc" and thus acquiring a share in the conduct of government by the majority coalition. Therefore under a multi-party system as well as under a two-party system the evils of evasion, postponement, and betrayal of constituents may occur. There is one difference, however, between the two systems. In countries where there are several parties coalitions are formed more or less secretly by leaders of party groups meeting in the committee rooms of parliament. Under the two-party system each of the parties must openly present its program, independently arrived at, to the judgment of the voters and the public criticism of its opponents.

### Multiplicity of issues

With the platforms of two major parties only to choose between, the intelligent and conscientious voter usually finds that neither meets with more than his partial approval. For example, he may approve the planks of one of them on the tariff and currency, and the planks of the other on trusts and preparedness. If one of these issues seems to him of paramount importance he may reach a decision in favor of the party which represents his views best regarding it, but he does so at the cost of his convictions on other issues. No doubt it is easier for the individual voter to find a political program more completely to his liking in countries where several parties are organized, each bidding principally for the support of some one social class. In every country, however, the number of major political issues is so considerable that, according to the mathematical theory of permutations, it would require an impossibly large array of parties to present enough platforms to meet the individual tastes of each voter. Even if political parties in the United States were as numerous as religious sects there would still be a very large number of voters unable to find a platform to meet their convictions at every point. However, no advocate of the multi-party system is prepared to favor political disintegration to this extent. A practical solution for the difficulty is supplied by the initiative and referendum, which afford the voter an opportunity to deal with each question

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submitted to him on its own merits, regardless of his party affiliation or his convictions on other issues.

The existence of a considerable number of political parties in any country is usually indicative of a pronounced development of class, racial, or sectional feeling in that country. No doubt the presence of many parties is to be explained largely as the result rather than as the cause of these antagonisms. Nevertheless, numerous small parties give organization and expression to class, racial, or sectional groups, and thus intensify the bitterness of their animosities. In the very nature of the case, on the other hand, wherever two great parties are pitted against each other they are forced to strive with all their might, as our major American parties have always done, to attach to themselves the greatest possible number of voters regardless of class, racial, or sectional feeling. On the basis of this distinction—certainly the most important that can be drawn between the two systems—radicals will naturally prefer the multi-party system, while persons of more moderate tendencies will quite as naturally prefer the two-party system.

Class, racial,  
and sectional  
feeling

## THE PROHIBITION PARTY

The Prohibition party is the oldest of our minor party organizations. It was founded in 1869, and has nominated candidates for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency in every national election since 1872. The primary purpose of the party, expressed with slight variations of wording in its platforms from 1876 on, is that "the manufacture, importation, exportation, transportation, and sale of alcoholic liquors for beverages shall be prohibited." To this end it pledged "the exercise of all governmental power—the enactment of statutes and the amendment of constitutions, state and national," holding that "only by a political party committed to this purpose can such a policy be made effective."<sup>1</sup>

Primary is-  
sue of the  
Prohibition  
party

<sup>1</sup> *National Prohibition Platform, 1916.*

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### Other issues

While devoted largely to this one issue, the Prohibitionists, early in the party's history, espoused a number of other causes, among them woman suffrage, uniform marriage and divorce laws, laws against polygamy and commercialized vice, civil-service reform, and direct elections. On current "paramount" political issues the party's platforms have usually spoken with a great deal of reserve, doubtless because its membership is largely made up of former Republicans and Democrats who still retain to a considerable degree their earlier partisan proclivities. Thus the Prohibition platform of 1912 declared in favor of "clearly defined laws for the regulation and control of corporations transacting an interstate business," "absolute protection of the rights of labor, without impairment of the rights of capital," and the fixing of the tariff "on the scientific basis of accurate knowledge, secured by means of a permanent, omni-partisan tariff commission with ample powers."<sup>1</sup>

### Platform of 1916

In 1916, the Prohibition party declared itself opposed to universal military service, to the "wasteful military program of the Democratic and Republican parties," and to private profit in the manufacture of the munitions of war. It proposed a world court and a compact among nations to dismantle navies and disband armies, pledging itself, until these proposals were accepted, to maintain an effective army and navy and to provide adequate coast defenses.

### Prohibition voting strength

At no time during its history has the voting strength of the Prohibition party been considerable. It reached high-water mark in 1892, when the party polled 264,133 votes for John Bidwell, its presidential candidate, out of a total popular vote of 12,059,351. In 1916, it cast 221,329 votes for J. Frank Hanly, the total popular vote in that year being 18,502,885. The party has never gained a seat in the electoral college. Nevertheless, the real strength of the anti-liquor movement was always enormously greater than the party vote. The latter represented only those who subordinated all other issues to the one issue of pro-

<sup>1</sup> *American Prohibition Year Book*, 1916, p. 10.



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hibition. Meanwhile converts were rapidly being made both by party propaganda and by the activities of such associations as the Anti-Saloon League among adherents of the major parties who, while remaining true to their old political allegiance, worked earnestly and effectively for local option, for state-wide prohibition, and even for a national prohibitory amendment.

It was this development, hastened somewhat by war conditions, which made possible the passage of the so-called War-Time Prohibition Act of November 21, 1918 (c. 212, 40 Stat. 1045) and the adoption, January 29, 1919, of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which provided that one year after its ratification "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited." Congress and the several states were given concurrent power to enforce the amendment by appropriate legislation. In the exercise of this power Congress passed the Volstead Act of October 28, 1919, defining intoxicating liquors as those containing one half of one per cent or more of alcohol by volume. Decisions of the Supreme Court, handed down June 7, 1920, set at rest all lingering doubts as to the constitutionality of this legislation.<sup>1</sup>

Prohibition  
Amendment  
and Vol-  
stead Act

It is a striking fact that political achievements so important as the adoption of the Prohibition Amendment and the enactment of legislation based on it were accomplished amid the silence of the two great parties so far as their national platforms were concerned. Of course the votes which made these achievements possible were with few exceptions those of Republican and Democratic Congressmen and legislators acting as individuals except in the cases of some of the latter who were bound by the state platforms of their parties to vote dry. Credit for this remarkable achievement must be divided, although in the nature

Organiza-  
tions which  
brought  
about  
prohibition

<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island *vs.* Palmer; Feigenspan *vs.* Bodine, etc., etc.

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of the case accurate apportionment among the contributing organizations is out of the question. According to leaders of the various dry groups, however, the Prohibition party was a factor of prime importance, especially in the pioneering stage of the movement. Constitutional amendment was its original goal, it never compromised the issue, and the solution, so far as the question is settled, finally came in the form the party had predicted. The name of the party on the ballot at every election was in itself valuable advertising for the cause. The intransigent attitude of the party was both its strength and its weakness—its strength as an educational movement, its weakness as a vote-getter. Without assistance from organizations of a different type it is doubtful whether the party would ever have achieved prohibition. The Anti-Saloon League was the practical unit in the dry ranks, and its effectiveness increased mightily in the later years of the agitation. In some respects the relationship between the Prohibition party and the League resembles that between the Abolitionists and the Free Soil party. The Anti-Saloon League's first goal was to prevent the licensing of more saloons, to secure local option in smaller political units. From this it passed to state-wide and nation-wide prohibition. Lacking the sweeping and uncompromising character of the Prohibition party, it was able, with the support of the churches, to assemble a large and influential following. Its members, by the way, remained Democrats and Republicans after they became Leaguers. So effective was the League in the collection of funds, the influencing of elections, and the supervision of the legislative conduct of those it had aided to secure office, that its wet opponents denounced it as a tyrannical organization, not a party, yet more than a party. Those who claim major credit for the League do so on the ground that it elected the Congressmen who voted for the Eighteenth Amendment and the state legislatures which ratified it. Finally acknowledgment must be made of the work of the W. C. T. U. in organizing the women of the nation and for its extensive campaigns among children. As more and

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more of the states granted woman suffrage and as children educated under W. C. T. U. influence became voters the political balance inclined heavily against the wets. The advent of war called the attention of the public to the waste of food, fuel, and man power caused by the manufacture of liquor. Also, it is easier to get sweeping legislation through in war time. Leading dry advocates estimate that without the war prohibition might have been delayed from two to twenty years.<sup>1</sup>

With its main objectives thus sweepingly attained there might seem to be little or no reason for continuing the Prohibition party. Its leaders insist, however, that the organization must be maintained in order to secure the enactment of further legislation, both national and state, necessary to carry out the purposes of the Eighteenth Amendment in letter and in spirit; also to supervise vigilantly the administration of such legislation. Further they call attention to the fact that the party stands, as it has always stood, for numerous other reforms, and urge its continuance until these have been attained. The failure of both major parties to refer to the subject of prohibition in their platforms of 1920 greatly strengthened the determination of dry leaders to keep up the fight.

Why continue the Prohibition party?

Accordingly the party called a national convention to meet at Lincoln, Nebraska, July 22, 1920, which nominated Aaron S. Watkins of Ohio for the Presidency, and D. Leigh Colvin of New York for the Vice-Presidency. On their principal issue the platform states that "the organized liquor traffic is engaged in a treasonable attempt to nullify the Amendment by such modification of the enforcement act as will increase the alcoholic content in beer and wine and thus thwart the will of the people as constitutionally expressed. In the face of this open threat the Republican and Democratic parties refused to make platform declarations in favor of law enforcement, though petitioned to do so by multitudes of people. Thus the

Prohibition convention, 1920

<sup>1</sup> For these conclusions the writer is indebted to a Swarthmore thesis of 1922 on *Dry Organizations*, by G. W. Davis.

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Prohibition party remains the sole political champion of National Prohibition. . . . The issue is not only the ENFORCEMENT but also the MAINTENANCE of the law to make the Amendment effective. The proposed increase in the alcoholic content of beverages would be fraught with grave danger in that it would mean the return of the open saloon with all its attendant evils."

Minor  
issues

On minor issues the Prohibition platform of 1920 adds little to earlier declarations of party principles. However, it declares for the immediate ratification of the treaty of peace, "not objecting to reasonable reservations interpreting American understanding of the covenant." The program of the National League of Women Voters is approved and adopted. The Prohibition party also "pledges the nation to rid it of the profiteer and to close the door against his return," and finally it "pledges impartial enforcement of all law."

## THE FARMER-LABOR PARTY

"Committee  
of 48"

Most recent among our national political organizations is the Farmer-Labor party, which was formed at a national convention held in Chicago, beginning July 12, 1920. The initial step toward this fusion movement was taken by "the Committee of 48," organized at a meeting in New York City, January, 1919, by a number of men and women representing many divergent views on public affairs, but all of them thoroughly out of sympathy with both the major parties. Prominent among them were many writers on political and economic topics, social workers, Single-Taxers and other reformers, and former Progressives. The name "Committee of 48" was chosen as representative of the national union of forty-eight states.

St. Louis  
Conference,  
1919

By means of questionnaires the committee sought "an expression of the liberal mind of America." In December, 1919, it held a conference at St. Louis, adopted a brief program of three planks: one for public ownership of various specified industries; a second against the specula-

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tive holding of land and patents out of use to aid monopoly; and the third for equal economic, political, and legal rights for all, irrespective of sex or color.<sup>1</sup>

Under the auspices of the Committee of 48 a national convention was also called to meet at Chicago, July 12, 1920. This was timed to coincide with a convention held by a number of radical labor men, out of sympathy with the official leadership of the American Federation of Labor, who purposed the launching of a labor party. The Single-Taxers also called a national convention for the same date. In addition there were present in Chicago at this time members of various other organizations, among them the Farmers' National Council, the Nonpartisan League, the American Constitutional Party, the American Party of Texas, the World War Veterans' Association, the Rank and File Veterans' Organization, and others.

Convention  
of 1920

Upon meeting in joint assembly, it speedily developed that the radical delegates present, particularly of the labor element, outnumbered more than two to one the more moderate representatives of the Committee of 48. The platform draft presented by the latter was voted down, and the convention nominated Parley P. Christensen of Utah for President, and Max S. Hayes of Ohio for Vice-President. The name "Farmer-Labor Party" was chosen, although this had been objected to by the more moderate elements as too suggestive of class struggle. During and following the convention several of the leaders of the Committee of 48 bolted, as did also a number of delegates representing various other of the organizations present. Among the latter were the Single-Taxers, who returned to their own convention and nominated for the Presidency Robert C. MacAuley of Pennsylvania, and for the Vice-Presidency, R. G. Barnum of Ohio.

Radical  
forces in  
control

The platform of the Farmer-Labor party asserts that

<sup>1</sup> L. Colcord, "The Committee of Forty-Eight," in *The Nation*, vol. cix, p. 821 (Dec. 27, 1919); see also articles entitled "New Political Alignment," in *The Nation*, vol. cviii, p. 460 (March 29, 1919); and "Towards a New Party," in the *New Republic*, vol. xx, p. 41 (Aug. 13, 1919).



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### Farmer- Labor platform

the power of government in the United States "has been stolen from the people . . . by a few men who control the wealth of the nation and by the tools of these men, maintained by them in public office to do their bidding. . . . The people, as a result of this usurpation, have been reduced to economic and industrial servitude." The wielders of financial power have committed the government of the United States, against the will of the people, to imperialistic policies and have leagued themselves with the money masters of other nations to prevent self-determination by helpless peoples and to exploit and rob them. To meet these alleged conditions "all power to govern this nation must be restored to the people. This involves industrial freedom, for political democracy is only an empty phrase without industrial democracy."

### Detailed policies

Among the detailed policies presented are the restoration of civil liberties; protection of the right of all workers to strike; stripping from the courts of usurped powers, especially the power to issue anti-labor injunctions and to declare unconstitutional laws passed by Congress; the election of federal judges for terms not to exceed four years, subject to recall; universal suffrage, the immediate ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, and full, unrestricted political rights for all men and women regardless of sex, race, color, or creed, and for civil service employees; the initiative, referendum, and recall, with the special provision that war may not be declared, except in cases of actual military invasion, before referring the question to a direct vote of the people; and prevention of the imposition upon the people of the United States of any form whatever of conscription, military or industrial, or of military training.

### International policies

On international questions the Farmer-Labor platform includes emphatic refusal to go to war with Mexico at the behest of Wall Street; recognition of the elected government of the Republic of Ireland and of the government established by the Russian people; and the withdrawal of the United States from further participation, under the

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treaty of Versailles, in the reduction of conquered peoples to economic or political subjection. However, the party stands committed to "a league of free peoples, organized and pledged to destruction of autocracy, militarism, and economic imperialism throughout the world and to bring about world-wide disarmament and open diplomacy, to the end that there shall be no more kings and no more wars."

The section of the Farmer-Labor platform devoted to the democratic control of industry opens with a relatively moderate statement proclaiming "the right of labor to an increasing share in the responsibilities and management of industry; application of this principle to be developed in accordance with the experience of actual operation." Immediately following this, however, there is a plank providing for the "public ownership and operation, with democratic operation of the railroads, mines, and natural resources, including stockyards, large abattoirs, grain elevators, water power, and cold storage and terminal warehouses; government ownership and democratic operation of the railroads, mines, and of such natural resources as are in whole or in part bases of control by special interests of basic industries and monopolies such as lands containing coal, iron, copper, oil, large water power and commercial-timber tracts; pipe lines and oil tanks; telegraph and telephone lines; and establishment of a public policy that no land (including natural resources) and no patents shall be held out of use for speculation or to aid monopoly."

**Democratic  
control of  
industry**

Various planks are proposed for the promotion of agricultural prosperity. On government finance the platform denounces "the system that has created one war millionaire for every three American soldiers killed in the war in France." It proposes the taxing of this war-acquired wealth, also steeply graduated income taxes, exempting individual incomes of less than \$3,000 a year; and for state and local governments taxation of land value, excluding improvements and equipment, and also sharply graduated

**Taxation  
and other  
issues**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

taxes on inheritances. To reduce the cost of living the platform advocates stabilization of the currency, federal control of the meat-packing industry, extension of the parcel-post system, and the enforcement of existing laws against profiteers, "especially the big and powerful ones." Under the heading "Justice to the Soldiers," there is a plank which favors "paying the soldier of the late war, as a matter of right and not as charity, a sufficient sum to make their war pay not less than civilian earnings."

"Bill of  
rights of  
labor"

In conclusion the Farmer-Labor party pledges itself to a "Bill of Rights of Labor" consisting of twelve points among which are a maximum standard eight-hour day and forty-four-hour week; old age and unemployment payments, and workmen's compensation; government works for the benefit of the unemployed during periods of depression; re-education of the cripples of industry as well as the victims of war; abolition of employment of children under sixteen; protection of women in industry, with equal pay for equal work; and abolition of private employment detective and strike-breaking agencies, and extension of the federal free employment service.

Farmer-  
Labor vote,  
1920

For the Farmer-Labor candidates 265,411 votes were cast in the election of 1920, giving it rank above the Prohibitionists and below the Socialists. While this result fell short of the expectations of adherents, it seems sufficiently creditable for a beginning. Recent successes in senatorial contests, particularly the election in July, 1923, of Magnus Johnson of Minnesota<sup>1</sup> by a plurality of 90,000 over the regular Republican candidate, show that the forces of dissatisfaction behind the Farmer-Labor movement, especially in the Northwest, have by no means subsided. "Dollar wheat," once the cherished goal of agricultural producers, has now become a powerful political irritant. It is increasingly evident that the old parties will have to reckon seriously with this discontent in 1924. An effective political combination between farmers and laborers in the

<sup>1</sup>R. Littell, "Magnus at Home," *New Republic*, vol. xxv, pp. 250-252 (Aug. 1, 1923).

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United States would be well-nigh irresistible. The difficulties in the way of its realization are, however, very great. As property owners and employers of labor, having their own troubles with farm hands, the interests of the agricultural class by no means coincide with those of city workmen. Nevertheless, the fruits of a political combination between farmers and laborers are so alluring that whether or not success crowns the present movement to effect it, attempts in that direction are certain to be repeated. .

### SOCIALIST PARTIES

The term socialism is currently used in at least four meanings, *viz.*, (1) a criticism of existing society; (2) a philosophy of social evolution; (3) a social forecast or ideal; and (4) a movement for the attainment of that ideal. From the point of view of a student of politics interest centers principally in the fourth of these meanings. In this sense of the word socialism has been defined as "a movement, primarily consisting of the members of the wealth-producing class, which seeks to control all the powers of the state and to bring about the collective ownership and control of the principal means of production and exchange, in order that poverty, class antagonisms, vice, and other ill results of the existing social system may be abolished, and that a new and better social system may be attained."<sup>1</sup>

**Socialism  
defined**

As the above formula indicates, the major issue of the Socialist party is the need of a reorganization of our economic life, a reorganization which "will remove the land, the mines, forests, railroads, mills and factories, all the things required for our physical existence, from the clutches of industrial and financial freebooters and place them securely and permanently in the hands of the people."<sup>2</sup> In the campaign of 1916, as in its other campaigns, the party held that all special issues arising from

**Major is-  
sue of the  
Socialist  
party**

<sup>1</sup> Spargo and Arner, *Elements of Socialism*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Socialist party platform, 1916.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

temporary situations, whether domestic or foreign, must be subordinated to this major issue. Nevertheless, in its platform of that year the Socialist party expressed itself at length on the questions of military preparedness and the possibility of war which were then forcing themselves upon the country. The following statements, taken from that platform, should be contrasted with the war and preparedness planks of the two major parties, as presented previously.

**Socialist  
planks on  
war and  
prepared-  
ness**

The great war which has engulfed so much of civilization and destroyed millions of lives is one of the natural results of the capitalist system of production. Fundamentally, it was the desire of competing national groups of capitalists to grasp and control the opportunities for profitable foreign investments and trade which brought about the war, and it is that same desire which prompts the present organized effort to fasten upon this country the crushing burdens of militarism. Not until the capitalist system of production is replaced by a system of industrial democracy will wars for markets cease and international peace be securely established. . . .

The capitalist class for a great many years has been trying to saddle upon the country a greater army and a greater navy. A greater army is desired to keep the working class of the United States in subjection. A greater navy is desired to safeguard the foreign investments of American capitalists and to "back up" American diplomacy in its efforts to gain foreign markets for American capitalists. The war in Europe, which diminished and is still diminishing the remote possibility of European attack upon the United States, was nevertheless seized upon by capitalists and by unscrupulous politicians as a means of spreading fear throughout the country to the end that, by false pretenses, great military establishments might be obtained. We denounce such "preparedness," as both false in principle, unnecessary in character, and dangerous in its plain tendencies toward militarism. We advocate that sort of social preparedness which expresses itself in better homes, better bodies, and better minds, which are alike the products of plenty and the necessity of effective defense in war.

While maintaining that socialism alone could end war "by removing its causes," the Socialist party platform of 1916 asserted that even under the present capitalist order

**Socialist  
peace  
measures**



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additional measures could be taken to safeguard peace, as follows:

(1) That all laws and appropriations for the increase of the military and naval forces of the United States shall be immediately repealed.

(2) That the power be taken from the President to lead the nation into a position which leaves no escape from war. . . . We, therefore, demand that the power to fix foreign policies and conduct diplomatic negotiations shall be lodged in the Congress and shall be exercised publicly, the people reserving the right by referendum to order Congress, at any time, to change its foreign policy.

(3) That no war shall be declared or waged by the United States without a referendum vote of the entire people, except for the purpose of repelling invasion.

(4) That the Monroe Doctrine shall be immediately abandoned as a danger so great that even its advocates are agreed that it constitutes perhaps our greatest single danger of war.

(5) That the independence of the Philippine Islands be immediately recognized as a measure of justice both to the Filipinos and to ourselves.

(6) The government of the United States shall call a congress of all neutral nations to mediate between the belligerent powers in an effort to establish an immediate and lasting peace without indemnities, or forcible annexation of territory, and based on a binding and enforceable international treaty, which shall provide for concerted disarmament on land and at sea, and for an international congress with power to adjust all disputes between nations, and which shall guarantee freedom and equal rights to all oppressed nations and races.

In the presidential election of 1916, Benson and Kirkpatrick, the Socialist candidates for President and Vice-President, received a popular vote of 590,579—a decline of more than three hundred thousand as compared with the vote for Debs and Seidel in 1912. The Socialist Labor vote also fell from 29,259 in 1912 to 14,180 in 1916. Nevertheless, the party continued its vigorous anti-militarist and pacifist activities. A special emergency convention was called for April, 1917, meeting in St. Louis immediately after the declaration of war by the United

**Socialists  
in the elec-  
tion of 1916**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

States. At this convention an anti-war platform was drawn up and afterward approved by referendum vote of the party members. "In all modern history," it held, "there has been no war more unjustifiable than the war in which we are about to engage." The St. Louis resolution, as this platform was called, reaffirmed the position taken by the party in 1916, and in addition condemned the failure of the United States to observe the spirit of neutrality, denied that the war would advance the cause of democracy, and declared that the people had not been consulted prior to the declaration of war. There was also a plank opposing conscription.

Pro-war  
Socialists

Following the adoption of the St. Louis resolution a number of prominent Socialists left the party. Later these pro-war Socialists formed the Social-Democratic League, and endeavored to bring about a fusion, under the title of the National party, of various groups, chiefly Prohibitionists, Single-Taxers, Progressives, and former Socialists. During 1918 and 1919, also, the Socialists had to meet a new form of competition due to the establishment of a number of local labor parties and the growth of the Non-partisan League in the Northwest.

Socialist  
schisms

Throughout the whole course of its development in the United States the Socialist movement has been torn by schisms. So numerous were these that critics have often derided it as the party of "fifty-seven varieties." These internal dissensions, however, did not differ in kind from the factional fights common to the older parties, although among Socialists they seem to have been carried on with a degree of doctrinal subtlety and vehemence common to radical movements the world over. The most fundamental conflict of this character was precipitated by the growth within the party of the "Left Wing," or more radical section. Inclining toward syndicalism, the Left Wing took up "direct action"—that is, the general strike, sabotage, mass demonstrations, and revolutionary tactics generally. The "Right Wing," or moderate section, on the other hand, favored political action, namely peaceful

## MINOR PARTIES IN 1920

propaganda, designed to win votes, elect candidates, and thus, through control of government won by democratic means, to introduce socialism.

A clash between these two elements, which came in 1912, resulted in the defeat of the Left Wing, and an amendment to the party constitution providing that those who advocated violence and sabotage should be subject to expulsion. From time to time an open breach in the party was averted by drafting platforms which presented the general principles or ultimate aims of socialism in a sufficiently sweeping manner to hold the radical element, adding a "working program" for immediate action of so mild a character as to win the support of the more moderate element.

**Left Wing  
vs. Right  
Wing**

The Left Wing movement was enormously stimulated by the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and by the belief that it portended world-wide revolution. Prosecution of radicals by the government during the war, the influx into the Socialist party of foreign, I. W. W., and Socialist Labor elements, and dissatisfaction with certain party officials also strengthened the Left Wing movement. A convention of its adherents was held in New York, June 21, 1919, a majority of the delegates to which decided to continue their fight within the party for control of its machinery. The seceding minority, composed of the Russian federations and the Michigan group, withdrew and formed the Communist party.

**Bolshevism  
and the  
Left Wing**

On August 30, 1919, a second emergency convention of the Socialist party met in Chicago. At this convention the Left Wing delegates found themselves in a decided minority. From the outset turmoil marked the proceedings to such an extent that police were called in to restore order. This appeal by Socialists for help to the forces of the capitalist state which they are attacking was savagely criticized by radicals in their midst, and, not unnaturally, it caused more or less satirical laughter among adherents of the existing order. A bolt of 26 out of the 150 delegates followed, and the seceding element, with some later acces-

**Formation  
of the Com-  
munist La-  
bor party**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

sions, formed the Communist Labor party on September 2d following.

Socialist  
and Commu-  
nist groups  
in 1920

The results of the somewhat involved developments sketched above may now be summarized. In 1917 the Socialist party, which had taken a decisive anti-war stand, lost several of its most influential publicists to the right. In 1919, the party's refusal to meet the demands of its Left Wing members resulted in their secession and the formation of two new groups, the Communist and the Communist Labor parties. Although calling themselves parties, the two latter scarcely deserve that title. At bottom they owe their existence to their opposition to party methods. In reality they are propagandist associations with revolutionary aims similar to those of the Russian Bolsheviks. Late in May, 1920, a fusion under the name of the United Communist party was effected between the Communist Labor party and a section of the Communist party not dominated by the Russian Federation. The "underground," or secret, convention which formed the U. C. P. was held "somewhere between the Atlantic and the Pacific, between the Gulf and the Great Lakes." Delegates to it used assumed names in order to baffle agents of the Department of Justice. A program was drawn up advocating "the dictatorship of the proletariat" during the transitional period, and predicting civil war between the working class and a coming capitalist military dictatorship. Somewhat later the other of these groups, still using the name of the Communist party, held a similar "underground" convention. It also drew up a program largely devoted to proving how "pink" the United Communist party "adventurers and charlatans" really were. In its constitution the Communist party proclaims itself "an underground illegal organization," and in its program it specifically includes "armed insurrection and civil war" under its definition of revolutionary mass action. One of the humors of this second "underground" convention was a denunciation of the I. W. W. as "that most conservative organization." Seven thousand out of the 8,350 dues-

## MINOR PARTIES IN 1920

paying members of the Communist party were reported to be of Slavic origin.<sup>1</sup> Throughout all these developments, it should be noted, the Socialist Labor party maintained its separate existence and organization. In 1920, therefore, there were four radical groups in the United States, each calling itself a party and each using either "socialist" or "communist" as part of its designation.

Notwithstanding this process of disintegration, the Socialist party remained by far the largest of the radical political organizations of the country. In spite of the secession of a large part of its Communist Left Wing members, the issues created by the Bolshevik revolution in Russia remained the most troublesome before the major Socialist body. At the Chicago emergency convention of the Socialist party in 1919 a majority report proposed the formation of a new international which would include the Communist (Bolshevik) party of Russia and such other parties only as should declare "their strict adherence by word and deed to the class struggle." A minority report indorsed the third (Moscow) international—in other words, it accepted Bolshevik leadership frankly. Referred to a referendum vote of the members of the Socialist party, the minority report carried by a vote of 3,475 to 1,444.<sup>2</sup> By its highest authority, therefore, the Socialist party of the United States accepted the Bolshevik international organization, and formal application for mem-

International  
affiliations

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the *Socialist Review*, vol. ix, pp. 92, 120 (Aug., Sept., 1920).

<sup>2</sup> For these reports and comment, see W. E. Walling, *Sovietism*, p. 198 *et seq.*; also H. W. Laidler, "The Socialist Convention," in the *Socialist Review*, vol. ix, pp. 26-36 (June, 1920). At the Socialist party convention, May 9-16, 1920, the question came up again, a majority report being accepted by a vote of 90 to 40, which reaffirmed the party's affiliation with Moscow, insisting, however, that "no formula such as the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of soviets" or any other special formula, be imposed as a condition of affiliation with the third (Moscow) international, and looking forward to the participation of all true socialist forces in one international. A minority report, presented by the more radical delegates, declared for affiliation with the third international without conditions. Both reports were referred to a referendum of the party members.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

bership therein was made on March 18th of the following year.

Declaration  
of princi-  
ples and  
platform,  
1920

For the national campaign of 1920, the Socialist party held its convention in New York City, May 9th to 16th, adopting a "Declaration of Principles" and a platform,<sup>1</sup> the more important sections of which are as follows:

### DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The Socialist party of the United States demands that the country and its wealth be redeemed from the control of private interests, and turned over to the people to be administered for the equal benefit of all.

America is not owned by the American people. Our so-called national wealth is not the wealth of the nation, but of the privileged few. These are the ruling class of America. They are small in numbers, but they dominate the lives and shape the destinies of their fellow men. They own the people's jobs and determine their wages; they control the markets of the world and fix the prices of the farmer's product; they own their homes and fix their rents; they own their food and set its cost; they own their press and formulate their convictions; they own the government and make their laws; they own their schools and mold their minds.

Around and about the capitalist class cluster the numerous and varied groups of the population generally designated as the "middle classes." . . . Their social psychology is that of retainers of the wealthy.

The bulk of the American people is composed of workers. . . . They create the enormous wealth of the country, but live in constant dread of poverty. They feed and clothe the rich, and yet bow to their alleged superiority. They keep alive the industries, but have no say in their management. They constitute the majority of the people, but have no control of the government. Despite the forms of political equality, the workers of the United States are virtually a subject class.

The Socialist party is the party of the workers. . . . It desires the workers of America to take the economic and political power from the capitalist class, not that they may establish themselves as

<sup>1</sup> Both may be found in the *Socialist Review*, vol. ix, pp. 36-42 (June, 1920), and in the *World Almanac* for 1921.

## MINOR PARTIES IN 1920

a new ruling class, but in order that all class divisions may be abolished forever. . . . The workers must realize that both the Republican and Democratic parties are the political instruments of the master classes, and equally pledged to uphold and perpetuate capitalism.

The Socialist party does not intend to interfere in the internal affairs of labor unions, but will always support the workers in all their economic struggles. In order, however, that such struggles may attain the maximum of efficiency and success, the Socialists favor the organization of workers along the lines of industrial unionism in the closest co-operation as one organized working-class army.

The Socialist party does not seek to interfere with the institution of the family as such, but promises to make family life fuller, nobler, and happier by removing the sordid factor of economic dependence of woman on man, and by assuring to all members of the family greater material security and more leisure to cultivate the joys of the home.

The Socialist party adheres strictly to the principle of complete separation of state and church. It recognizes the right of voluntary communities of citizens to maintain religious institutions and to worship freely according to the dictates of their conscience.

The Socialist party seeks to attain its end by orderly and constitutional methods, so long as the ballot box, the right of representation, and civil liberties are maintained. Violence is not the weapon of the Socialist party, but of the short-sighted representatives of the ruling classes, who stupidly believe that social movements and ideals can be destroyed by brutal physical repression. The Socialists depend upon education and organization of the masses.

The Socialist movement is a world struggle in behalf of human civilization. The Socialist party of the United States co-operates with similar parties in other countries, and extends to them its full support in their struggles, confident that the class-conscious workers all over the world will eventually secure the powers of government in their respective countries, abolish the oppression and chaos, the strife and bloodshed, of international capitalism, and establish a federation of Socialist republics, co-operating with each other for the benefit of the human race and for the maintenance of the peace of the world.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## THE SOCIALIST PARTY PLATFORM

The outgoing administration, like Democratic and Republican administrations in the past, leaves behind it a disgraceful record of solemn pledges unscrupulously broken and public confidence ruthlessly betrayed.

It obtained the suffrage of the people on a platform of peace, liberalism, and social betterment, but drew the country into a devastating war and inaugurated a régime of despotism, reaction, and oppression unsurpassed in the annals of the Republic.

It promised to the American people a treaty which would assure to the world a reign of international right and true democracy. It gave its sanction and support to an infamous pact formulated behind closed doors by predatory elder statesmen of European and Asiatic imperialism. Under this pact territories have been annexed against the will of their populations and cut off from their sources of sustenance; and nations seeking their freedom in the exercise of the much-heralded right of self-determination have been brutally fought with armed force, intrigue, and starvation blockades. . . . The Democratic administration helped create a reactionary alliance of imperialistic governments, banded together to bully weak nations, crush working-class governments, and perpetuate strife and warfare.

While thus furthering the ends of reaction, violence, and oppression abroad our administration suppressed the cherished and fundamental rights and civil liberties at home. . . .

And after the war was in fact long over the administration has not scrupled to continue a policy of repression and terrorism under the shallow and hypocritical guise of war-time measures.

It has practically imposed involuntary servitude and peonage on a large class of American workers by denying them the right to quit work and coercing them into acceptance of inadequate wages and onerous conditions of labor. . . .

Under the hypocritical cloak of a false patriotism and under the protection of governmental terror the Democratic administration has given the ruling classes unrestrained license to plunder the people by intensive exploitation of labor, by the extortion of enormous profits, and by increasing the cost of all necessities of life. Profiteering has become reckless and rampant, billions have been coined by the capitalists out of the suffering and misery of their fellow men. The American financial oligarchy has become a domi-

## MINOR PARTIES IN 1920

nant factor in the world, while the condition of the American workers grows more precarious.

The responsibility does not rest upon the Democratic party alone. The Republican party, through its representatives in Congress and otherwise, has not only openly condoned the political misdeeds of the last three years, but it has sought to outdo its Democratic rival in the orgy of political reaction and repression. . . .

We particularly denounce the militaristic policy of both old parties of investing countless millions of dollars in armaments after the victorious completion of what was to have been the "last war"; . . . and we demand immediate and complete abandonment of the fatal program.

The Socialist party of the United States therefore summons all who believe in this fundamental doctrine to prepare for a complete reorganization of our social system, based upon public ownership of public necessities; upon government by representatives chosen from occupational as well as from geographical groups, in harmony with our industrial development; and with citizenship based on service; that we may end forever the exploitation of class by class.

To achieve this end the Socialist party pledges itself to the following program:

### SOCIAL

All business vitally essential for the existence and welfare of the people, such as railroads, express service, steamship lines, telegraphs, mines, oil wells, power plants, elevators, packing houses, cold-storage plants, and all industries operating on a national scale should be taken over by the nation.

All publicly owned industries should be administered jointly by the government and representatives of the workers, not for revenue or profit, but with the sole object of securing just compensation and humane conditions of employment to the workers and efficient and reasonable service to the public.

All banks should be acquired by the government and incorporated in a unified public banking system.

The business of insurance should be taken over by the government, and should be extended to include insurance against accident, sickness, invalidity, old age, and unemployment, without contribution on the part of the worker.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Besides the foregoing list of so-called "social" reforms, the Declaration of Principles advocates the socialization of the system of public education,

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## FOREIGN RELATIONS

The government of the United States should initiate a movement to dissolve the mischievous organization called the "League of Nations," and to create an international parliament, composed of democratically elected representatives of all nations of the world, based upon the recognition of their equal rights, the principles of self-determination, the right to national existence of colonies and other dependencies, freedom of international trade and trade routes by land and sea, and universal disarmament, and charged with revising the treaty of peace on the principles of justice and conciliation.

The United States should immediately make peace with the Central Powers and open commercial and diplomatic relations with Russia under the Soviet government. It should promptly recognize the independence of the Irish Republic.

### Other foreign policies

In addition to the above-quoted planks on foreign relations, the Socialist party platform favors the mutual cancellation by the allied nations of war debts, including indemnities; the granting of credits in food, raw material, and machinery to the stricken nations of Europe; and acceptance of the principle that American capitalists making investments in foreign countries should do so at their own risk and without interference by our government in their favor.

### Industrial reforms

Under industrial reforms the Socialist party platform advocates laws abolishing child labor, fixing minimum wages, providing protection for migratory and unemployed workers; establishing a shorter work day; and abolishing detective and strike-breaking agencies.

### Political reforms

Political reforms are proposed as follows: the President, Vice-President, and federal judges to be elected by direct popular vote and made subject to recall; Cabinet members to be elected by and made responsible to Con-

health, and all activities and institutions vitally affecting public needs and welfare, including dwelling houses; also the socialization of all large farming estates and land used for industrial and public purposes, as well as all instrumentalities for storing, preserving, and marketing farm products. It does not, however, contemplate interference with the private possession of land actually used and cultivated by occupants.



## MINOR PARTIES IN 1920

gress; abrogation of the power of the courts to nullify congressional legislation; equal suffrage for men and women and provision for registration of the votes of migratory workers; the Constitution to be made amendable by a majority of the voters upon their own initiative or upon the initiative of Congress. A number of planks are designed to safeguard constitutional liberties, *viz.*, repeal of the espionage law and all other repressive legislation; prohibition of executive usurpation; pardon of all prisoners confined for alleged offenses growing out of religious convictions, political views, or industrial activities; stoppage of alien deportation on similar grounds; abolition of the power of the courts to restrain workers in their struggles against employers by the writ of injunction; enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and enactment of legislation to secure to negroes full civil, political, industrial, and educational rights, and amendment of the Constitution "to strengthen the safeguards of civil and political liberty and to remove all obstacles to industrial and social reform and reconstruction."

Finally, the Socialist party platform of 1920 proposed the following fiscal reforms: immediate payment of all war debts and other debts of the federal government, the funds for this purpose to be raised by a progressive property tax whose burden should fall upon the rich and particularly upon great fortunes made during the war; the levy of a standing progressive income and graduated inheritance tax to provide for all needs of the government; and taxation of the unearned increment of land, all land held out of use to be taxed at full rental value.

**Fiscal  
reforms**

For the Presidency the Socialist party convention of 1920 nominated Eugene V. Debs of Indiana, and for the Vice-Presidency, Seymour Stedman of Illinois. At the time Debs was a convict in the federal prison at Atlanta, Georgia, where he was serving a term of ten years for violation of the Espionage Act. It was his fifth nomination for the Presidency, Debs having been the candidate of the Socialist party in 1900, 1904, 1908, and 1912. While the

**Socialist  
vote, 1920**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

party cast a vote in November, 1920, larger by a few thousands than its best record of earlier years, the result must have been disheartening to party leaders who had predicted a total of some three millions. In fact, Debs received only 914,980, as compared with his vote of 901,873 in 1912. Benson, the Socialist party candidate in 1916, received only 590,579, and using this as a basis, a substantial gain, or rather a restoration, of popular support may be claimed. Considering its proportion to the total voting strength of the country, increased as this was in 1920 by full woman suffrage, the combined Socialist vote of that year represents the comparatively small fraction of 3.51 per cent. In former presidential years it had been as follows: 1908, 2.91 per cent; 1912, 6.19 per cent; 1916, 3.26 per cent.

Foreign and  
native-born  
members of  
the Socialist  
party

During the nineties of the last century, when the socialist movement was first taking organized form in the United States, its adherents were largely of foreign extraction. This was particularly true of the Socialist Labor party, most of the members of which were of European, and especially of German origin. The Socialist party, on the other hand, has made vigorous efforts to extend its membership among the native-born population. Considerable success has attended these efforts, not only among laborers, but also in the farming population, in literary, university, and professional circles. It is impossible to say exactly to what extent the present rank and file of Socialists are American by birth. As to the leaders of the party, the *New York Times* of May 13, 1920, made an investigation of the delegates to the national convention of the Socialist party in that year, which disclosed that 96 of the 156 delegates were born in the United States. Among the foreign-born members the principal countries represented were: Germany, 13; Russia, 12; Finland, 8; and Great Britain, 6. By occupation the great majority belonged to the skilled manual-working class, but there was a minority composed of clerical workers, merchants and salesmen, and representatives of various professions,

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including 18 editors and journalists, 12 lawyers, and 2 physicians.

The greatest voting strength of the Socialist party is in the large urban and industrial centers of the country. Very close to two thirds of the total Debs vote of 1920 was cast in the seven states of New York, Wisconsin, Illinois, Pennsylvania, California, Ohio, and Minnesota, the combined population of which is only one third that of the United States. The party also had a considerable following in 1920 throughout the Northwest and along the Pacific coast. In most of the Southern states its vote was very small. On the basis of Socialist enrolled voters and Socialist votes in elections *in proportion to population*, the manufacturing states, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Illinois, etc., take low rank, the leading states being those devoted to the extractive industries, mining and farming.

**Geographical distribution of Socialist vote**

Under the prevailing system of election by plurality the Socialist party rarely succeeds in electing any of its candidates to office except in those few districts where its vote is concentrated. Milwaukee was the first city to place its municipal offices in the hands of Socialists and also in 1910 it sent the first Socialist member, Victor L. Berger, to Congress. Milwaukee County has been carried by Socialist candidates with pluralities ranging from 5,000 to 7,000. In 1913, according to an official estimate, 667 Socialists held offices throughout the country, including 21 members of state legislatures in nine different states, 34 mayors of cities, 230 aldermen, 106 other municipal officers, 150 county officers, and 126 school trustees. Efforts to obtain from official sources the present number and kind of offices held by Socialists have proved unsuccessful. Owing to the disintegrating forces at work within the party, the number is probably much smaller now than in 1913.<sup>1</sup>

**Offices held by Socialists**

<sup>1</sup> In *The American Party System*, pp. 93-95, Prof. C. E. Merriam presents extended tables showing the number and kind of offices held by Socialists and members of other minor parties from 1896 to 1916.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Why Social-  
ism is not  
stronger in  
the United  
States

Repeatedly after Socialist victories the two major parties have fused locally in the next election. In spite of its present influence and occasional successes the leading question still remains: "Why is it that whereas in Europe the Socialist parties have won a leading position in public affairs, the Socialist party of the United States has, on the whole, lost much of the small vote which it had gathered after so many years of agitation?"<sup>1</sup> To this question raised by a well-known Socialist writer, Bertram Benedict, one of the younger intellectual leaders of the movement, has recently made a very incisive and comprehensive reply.<sup>2</sup> Summarized briefly the failure of the Socialist party to secure a larger following is ascribed, on the one hand, to its inability to free itself from the deductive Marxian mold of thought and to launch its appeal largely from an ethical basis. On the other hand, the party's lack of proselyting power is ascribed to various faults in the presentation of its case. Among these tactical errors Benedict lists the largely foreign-born, industrial, and urban make-up of the party, as a result of which "it does not understand the problems and the concepts of the great mass of Americans, even in the cities, who are not industrial workers. . . . In the second place, the American Socialist movement errs flagrantly in both disregarding and misconceiving the rôle played by personalities in carrying a political movement to fruition by the processes of political democracy. . . . One of the reasons for the American Socialist movement's comparatively feeble hold upon the American people lies in the failure of its leaders [Debs excepted] to impress the American people with a sense of nobility of character and fineness of purpose. . . . In the third place, and as a corollary of the preceding considerations, the Socialist movement in the United States seems blissfully unaware of the part played by administrative ability

<sup>1</sup> Isaac A. Hourwich, "The Socialist Vote at the Last Election," in the *Socialist Review*, vol. x, p. 76 (April-May, 1921).

<sup>2</sup> *The Larger Socialism*, especially chap. vii, with acknowledgment of the courtesy of the Macmillan Company.

## MINOR PARTIES IN 1920

in the conduct of government, capitalist or Socialist. . . . The dream of most Socialists is an all-Socialist administration, following success at the polls; and at the present time there is probably not sufficient material within the Socialist party of America to fill efficiently merely the ten Cabinet positions. . . . In the fourth place, the Socialist movement in the United States, like the other radical or 'liberal' movements, must learn the essentially unintellectual nature of the electorate's interests and sympathies. The electorate's most open avenue of approach is not that of reasoning; the appeal for its support must warm the cockles of its emotions before success may be dreamed of. . . . Finally, the Socialist movement would do well to emphasize more strongly than at present its remedy against a possible excess of population arising through increased social welfare—increased income to the family for each child only to the limited number of children seen to be desirable for the continuation of that social welfare, with even decreased wages or salaries for parents who have children too far in excess of the limit set, unless possibly by exceptions allowed those with manifestly and abnormally favorable heredity."

### BOOK NOTES

\* *The American Prohibition Year Book* (1916), published by the Prohibition National Committee, is a compendium of information regarding the party, its history, policies, and leaders. In 1917 the National Wholesale Liquor Dealers' Association of America issued *The Anti-Prohibition Manual*, a summary of facts and figures from their point of view.

The Farmer-Labor party is too young to have developed a literature of its own. In this connection, however, the student will find two books of identical title, *The Non-Partisan League*, valuable. The first, by H. E. Gaston (1920), is the work of an officer of the League who, as an "insider," is favorable to its methods and policies;



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

the second, by Judge A. A. Bruce (1921), is frankly opposed to the League's leadership and to many of its policies. Light is thrown on the social background of these new party movements in the popular novel *Main Street* (1920), by Sinclair Lewis.

Corresponding to the campaign text-books of the two major parties the *Socialist Campaign Books* (1908-1912), *The Socialist Hand Book* (1916), and \* *A Political Guide for the Workers* (1920), are valuable official sources of information regarding party policies and candidates. The monthly *Socialist Review* served admirably to keep its readers up to date on current developments in this field until its discontinuance recently, since which time the work has been continued by the *American Labor Monthly*, published at 100 Fifth Avenue, New York.

The literature of socialism is so vast that selection is extraordinarily difficult. However, the writer has found the following particularly helpful with students beginning the study of the subject: M. Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* (4th ed., 1906), and *Socialism in Theory and Practice* (1909); R. Hunter, *Socialists at Work* (1908); H. G. Wells, *New Worlds for Old* (1908); J. Spargo jointly with Professor Arner, *Elements of Socialism* (1911), and by the former alone, *Bolshevism, The Enemy of Political and Industrial Democracy* (1919); I. B. Cross, *Essentials of Socialism* (1911); W. E. Walling (editor), *The Socialism of Today* (1916), a source book on socialist and labor parties in all countries, and by the same as author, *Socialism as It Is* (1912), and *Sovietism* (1920); J. W. Hughan, *The Socialism of Today* (1916); and H. W. Laidler, *Socialism in Thought and Action* (1920). A brief but most judicious contribution is made by H. J. Ford, "Radicalism in American Politics," *Yale Review*, n.s. Vol. IX, pp. 759-770 (July, 1920). \* B. Benedict, *The Larger Socialism* (1921), is a remarkably able work indicting the present Socialist party in America for its procedure along various lines and presenting the Socialist thesis from a non-Marxian point of view. For exposition and cogent

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criticism from the anti-socialist point of view, \* O. D. Skelton, *Socialism: A Critical Analysis* (1919), is invaluable.

In the form of fiction the following are interesting: Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1889); W. D. Howells, *A Traveller from Altruria* (1894); Jack London, *Iron Heel* (1908); Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1906), *King Coal* (1917), *Jimmie Higgins* (1919)—all written from the socialistic point of view; and, in defense of the existing order or anti-socialistic, John Hay, *The Breadwinners* (1883); T. Dixon, *The One Woman* (1903); and D. M. Parry, *The Scarlet Empire* (1906).



*PART III*

PRESENT CONDITIONS OF PARTIES IN  
THE UNITED STATES





## CHAPTER VIII

### ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

ALTHOUGH not the most essential, certainly the most obtrusive feature of contemporary political parties is the enormous extent and complexity of their organization. At bottom this development is due to the extensions of suffrage made under the stress of the democratic impulse during the nineteenth century. In no country has this development been carried farther than in the United States. A rather striking evidence of this fact is found in the habit prevalent in some of our commonwealths and cities of referring colloquially to the dominant political party simply as "the Organization."

Extent and complexity of American party organization

However complicated the total mass of machinery involved, the principle underlying organization for political purposes is simplicity itself.) First the territory to be organized must be divided into local units small enough to be handled for electoral purposes by the party authority established therein. Above these local units various larger districts, each with its own party organ, must be set up, the whole hierarchy culminating in an authority coextensive with the country itself. Naturally, divisions and subdivisions of territory established by law, such as wards, towns, counties, and states, are utilized for the purpose of political districting, since the principal aim of parties is to nominate, elect, and control the legal office holders in each of these bailiwicks.

Underlying principle of party organization

(There is something of the simplicity and directness of military organization in the structure of political parties.) It is a significant fact that while our government in the

"Natural pyramiding of influence"

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

federal, state, and municipal spheres has been profoundly influenced by the doctrine of the separation of powers and check and balance among them, theories of this sort have had little or no effect upon our party organization. Instead, what has been aimed at and to some degree attained in party structures may well be described as a "natural pyramiding of influence."<sup>1</sup> To this extent the organization of political parties in the United States is more closely akin to that of an industrial corporation or of a labor union than to that of our constitutional government.

Temporary  
and permanent  
organs

The organs of party government are of two kinds—temporary and permanent.<sup>2</sup> To the first class belong conventions and primaries; to the second, the whole hierarchy of party committees ranging from precinct, ward, or town committee at the bottom to the national committee at the top of the party structure. Theoretically the temporary are of higher power than the permanent party organs. Primaries and conventions make nominations, and this function is not only of the greatest practical importance, it is also, as we have had occasion to note, the typical characteristic of a political party. Conventions exercise the power of formulating the party's official creed through platforms. This is the nearest approach to legislative action possessed by any party organ. Further, the power possessed by conventions to pass upon contesting delegations is, or at least should be, exercised in judicial fashion. In a sense, therefore, conventions, which by the way are always single-chambered bodies, possess legislative, executive, and judicial powers. Of course, direct primaries, which have supplanted conventions wholly in some states, do not function legislatively or judicially, but they do retain the prime executive power, that of making nominations. Finally, the convention is assumed to be the party assembled in the persons of its duly chosen representatives;

<sup>1</sup> W. Lippmann, *A Preface to Politics*, chap. i.

<sup>2</sup> A third group might be recognized, that of the auxiliary bodies formed during a campaign to promote party success or to emphasize some feature of the party program. For a discussion of such bodies see chap. xii.

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the direct primary is the whole membership of the party taking action officially in its name.

On the other hand, the hierarchy of permanent party committees possesses, except in cases of emergency, administrative functions only. It takes the necessary steps preliminary to the holding of conventions or primaries, and it is assumed to carry out loyally the decisions of the latter. So far, it will be observed, the system of party committees appears to be inferior in the scope of its powers to conventions and primaries and also to be subordinated to the latter in the exercise of its own powers. Practically, however, this relationship may be reversed; indeed, such is frequently the case. There are several reasons for the latter condition. In the first place, conventions and primaries are temporary affairs, the former usually lasting less than a week, the latter lasting only a few hours or a day. Party committees, on the other hand, last from campaign to campaign or for definite terms, such as four years or two years, and their members are more or less actively engaged in political manipulation during a large part of the time. Further, party committees are made up of seasoned politicians, the "regulars" of the organization, many of whom hold public as well as party office. Men of this type form a large element in all conventions frequently exceeding in number the non-party office holders, who may be said to be the militia of politics. By carefully arranging the preliminaries of a convention, therefore, party committees may predetermine its action on all important measures. After the sessions of the convention success or failure at the polls depends largely upon the conduct of party committees. It is true, of course, that the direct primary was invented largely in the hope of overthrowing the predominance of the party organization, but it is also true that this result is secured only in exceptional cases.

Leaving for future discussion the temporary organs of party—*viz.*, conventions and primaries—let us turn to the structure and functions of the permanent system of party committees. At the bottom this system is represented

Functions of  
party com-  
mittees

The "unit  
cell" of  
party  
structure

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

by the precinct committee or committeeman, the "unit cell" of the party structure.<sup>1</sup> As a rule, two principal factors are considered in determining the size of precincts: (1) the number of votes that can be cast conveniently in a day, which is of major importance in cities; and (2) the distance which voters must cover to reach the polls, which is of major importance in rural districts. On the basis of the presidential election of 1920, the average actual participation per precinct throughout the country was close to 270 votes. Various local standards prevail as to the size of precincts. In Illinois the law provides that precincts should contain as near 500 voters as may be, and are to be subdivided when the number exceeds 800. The Ohio law permits subdivision when the number exceeds 400. The New York election law (§ 64) provides that each town with more than 500 voters and each ward with more than 600, or, if voting machines are used, each town or ward with more than 700, shall be divided into election districts. However, a town or ward with not more than 1,000 voters need not be divided if two voting machines are used. It is estimated that there are at least 100,000 precincts in the United States, the number having been increased considerably of late, owing to the large increase in the size of the electorate brought about by woman suffrage.

Organized  
and unor-  
ganized  
precincts

In sections of the country where one of the major parties is in a hopeless minority it may happen that a great many precincts are not organized, that is, are without committees or committeemen of that party. This is true, for instance, of the Republican party in many sections of the "solid South," and it is true of the Democratic party in such "rock-ribbed" Republican states as Pennsylvania. Strenuous efforts are made to fill up such gaps, particularly during national campaigns, but with partial success only. With these exceptions, however, the major parties have committees or committeemen in every precinct throughout the country. Like nearly all party offices,

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*, p. 68.



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these posts are unsalaried. However, in all cases where the party has a chance of success in elections they are sought after more or less eagerly by local leaders. Formerly they were filled by caucuses of voters in the precinct. Nowadays in states which have adopted the direct-primary system, candidates for such posts are usually nominated upon a petition signed by a small number of electors and chosen in the ensuing primary election by plurality vote of the enrolled party members in the precinct.

Whether the party authority in the precinct is made up of a single committeeman or by a small committee is a matter of minor importance. In the latter event it will nearly always be found that one member of the committee plays a dominant rôle, the others serving as his official lieutenants in some subdivision of the precinct, or, it may be, taking charge of certain details of the work under the leader's direction. When there is a single committeeman in a precinct he will, as a rule, have a retinue of from three to a dozen or more unofficial followers ready at all times to undertake, without direct remuneration, such political duties as he may assign to them. If, as is usually the case in boss-ridden communities, these followers are so subservient as to be willing to perform not only routine work of the organization, but also to undertake shady commissions or even to commit crimes against the ballot box, they are known as "heelers."

Precinct  
committee-  
men and  
heelers

The official duties of a precinct committeeman cover all the local details of the voting process, such as assisting aliens to procure naturalization papers, registration and enrollment, conducting campaigns, getting out the maximum party vote at all primaries and elections, providing watchers, nominating polling clerks and other election officials, watching the count, and hurrying reports of the result to headquarters. In the execution of these manifold details much must be left to the local knowledge and personal resourcefulness of the committeeman. To some degree, however, his work is supervised and directed by the higher party authorities of the city or county. From the

Official  
duties of  
precinct  
committee-  
men



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

latter the local leader may ask aid in undertakings too large or too highly specialized for local management, such as providing political literature or sending speakers to public meetings. The precinct committee is entitled to draw upon the city or county committee for its share of campaign funds collected by the latter, and also for its share of patronage, jobs, and other political favors where-with to reward its own members or their faithful henchmen. Usually the precinct committee is expected to supply all the workers or "heelers" needed for purely local jobs, but in cases of emergency special workers may be sent in from the outside. In boss-ridden communities some of the latter are likely to be "experts" in bribery, colonization, repeating, and the commission of other election crimes. Considering the possibility of criminal action there is a manifest advantage in having "experts" of this character come from other wards, counties, or, if the district is close to a boundary line, from a neighboring state.

### Social duties of precinct committee- men

In addition to his official duties a precinct committeeman finds much to occupy his time. Naturally it is to his advantage to take as active and helpful a part as possible in the social life of his bailiwick. In slum wards, as we shall have occasion to note later, he becomes a sort of personal providence to his people in all the trials and afflictions of their lives from day to day. Even in districts of a higher type the local leader is "a very present help in trouble," especially if the trouble is of a sort which requires adjusting with public authority. For example, gentlemen who would like to have their tax assessments reduced, or the street lighting of their neighborhood improved, or who, perchance, have learned too late that their automobiles could not outrace the motorcycle policeman, all find the friendly interest of the local political leader an asset of considerable importance. A precinct leader in a middle-class suburban community with which the author is familiar makes it a practice to send in the names of a large number of his busy fellow citizens—of course, without their knowledge—for jury duty at the county court. What they do

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know is that he is always most happy to "see the judge" and secure exemption for them.

On the basis of but one committeeman to a precinct Professor Merriam estimates the number of such party officers at 100,000 for each of the major parties, a total of 200,000 for the country as a whole.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to tell how greatly this number has been increased since the adoption of the woman-suffrage amendment by the addition of women committee members. Taking the United States as a whole, the organization of the minor parties is very fragmentary and incomplete; nevertheless, they must have many thousands of local workers in the field. If each of the major parties musters an average of six workers to a precinct—certainly a conservative estimate—the total number of active Democratic and Republican partisans in the country would amount to 1,200,000. In addition to these regular troops every hard fought campaign witnesses the formation of innumerable auxiliary committees, clubs, and organizations which spring up like mushrooms, and as rapidly fade away after the election. These militia troops may readily equal or even exceed the number of regulars in the field. All together, therefore, each of the major parties may have from a million to a million and a quarter local workers actively engaged in a presidential campaign.

Number of  
committeemen and  
party  
workers

No account is taken in the foregoing estimate of higher party officials. In all probability, however, the latter form no larger a proportion of the total forces engaged in a campaign than the proportion of commissioned officers to an army in battle. The arrangement of authorities in the party hierarchy is exhibited in the diagram on the following page.

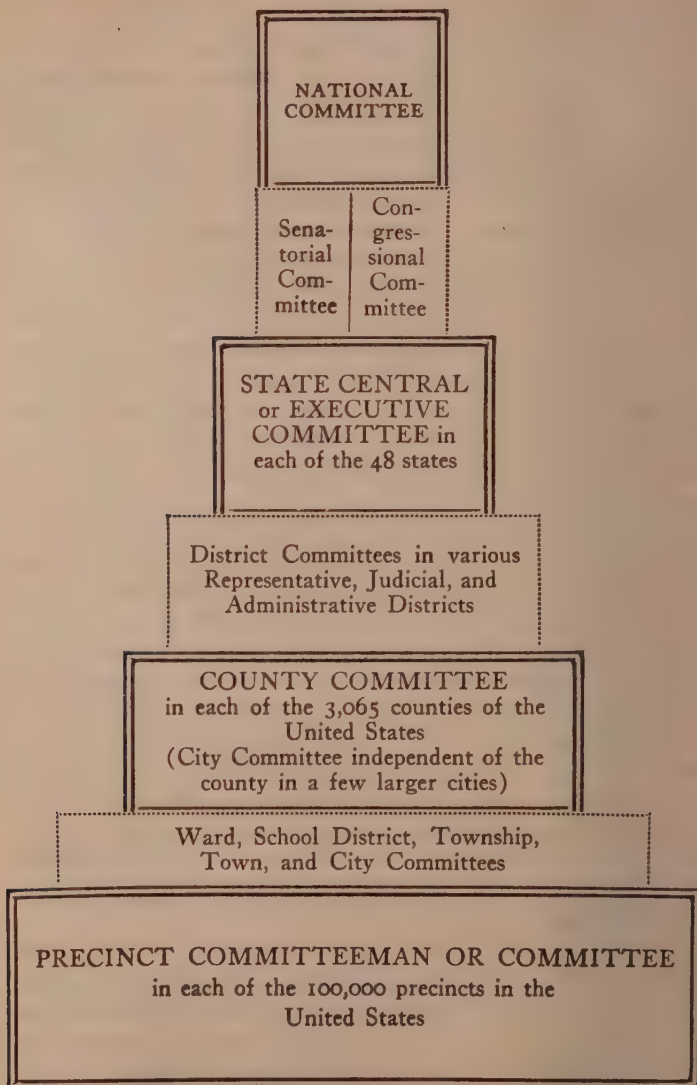
Higher  
party  
officials

Immediately above the precinct authorities, it will be observed, are various ward, township, town and city committees. In some cities the precinct is not organized as such, the ward committee being the smallest local party organ. Not all of the other committees named above are

Ward, town-  
ship, town,  
and city  
committees

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 69.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS



## ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

to be found in a given territory. Thus in a small town there may be no ward committee, and quite frequently no party authority exists between a rural precinct committee and the central committee of the county in which it is located. Usually a ward committee is composed of one or more precinct committeemen from each of its precincts, and the township, town, city, and even the county committees are similarly recruited from below. Thus the leading committeeman chosen by caucus or direct primary in a precinct may be *ex officio* a member of the ward, city, or county committee. Or the derivation of powers may be reversed, as, for example, in Pennsylvania, where the successful candidate in a precinct for the office of county committeeman is recognized as the party committeeman in that precinct. In a few of our larger cities which are coterminous with counties or in which the county government has been supplanted by the municipal establishment there are no county committees, the city committee being recognized instead. Party organization in such large cities is much more elaborate than in small towns or rural districts, and for that reason will be described in some detail later.

Between the precinct and other purely local party authorities, on the one hand, and the state central authority, on the other, the county committee usually stands out as a particularly vigorous center of political activity.<sup>1</sup> This is accounted for in part by the convenient size of the county, which makes it possible for party officials to reach every precinct readily and for committeemen to come to

County  
committees

<sup>1</sup> The importance of the county in political organization varies with the section of the country. C. L. Jones, "The County in Politics," *Annals of the American Academy*, vol. xlvii, pp. 85-100 (May, 1913), notes that "the 'county ring' of the Middle West is known in New England only by report." Pennsylvania is "one of the states in which the county organization has developed greatest strength." In the Southern states "personal politics rather than party politics are the characteristic of political struggles and the county does not afford an agency of control easily seized upon by the candidates." Generally, however, it is true that in counties which contain large cities the political organization may become highly important.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

central meetings without having to travel any considerable distance. Local leaders and influential voters are obliged to visit the county seat for many purposes and it thus becomes a natural center for political conference and gossip. Of even greater importance as accounting for the prominence of the county committee and its leaders are the considerable salaries and not too onerous duties attached to various elective county offices—commissioners, judges, sheriff, prosecuting attorney, treasurer, auditor, and the like. There are in the United States some 45,000 elective county offices of this sort, making an average of fifteen to a county. Finally there is a list several times larger than the foregoing of appointive county offices carrying smaller salaries on the average, but all eagerly sought after. Inasmuch as civil-service tests are employed in only a score of counties, the great majority of these offices also are obtained as rewards for meritorious party service. Hence the importance of a county chairman who is able to dominate his committee and dispose of these “plums.” Indeed, in the absence of a state boss it is not at all unusual to find the party organization of a state under the more or less complete control of a small group of influential county chairmen.

### District committees

Between the county committee and the state committee there are various district committees functioning in districts fixed by law for the election of Congressmen, judges, and certain administrative officials. Compared with the county committee below them and the state committee above, these bodies are of minor importance. Not infrequently their only business is to look after the election of a candidate for a single office at intervals of two or more years. Most of this work may be transferred to the county chairmen of the counties making up the district. The latter, indeed, often compose the membership of such district committees.<sup>1</sup> In other cases district committees are

<sup>1</sup> As in the case of Indiana Congressional District Committees. See § 23, *Rules and Regulations, Republican State Central Committee, as amended May 10, 1922.*



## ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

made up of members chosen to represent smaller territorial units, such as counties or legislative districts.<sup>1</sup>

Next in order in the party hierarchy are the state central or state executive committees. Both the major parties are represented by a committee of this character in each of the states of the Union. Some of these committees have had a long and distinguished history, being lineal descendants of the "committees of correspondence" formed during the pre-Revolutionary period in certain of the Colonies. At the present time state central committees are extraordinarily lively centers of a rather variegated political activity. Exceptions exist in the case of those states where the party outlook is hopeless and where, in consequence, their main preoccupation is the distribution of crumbs of federal patronage. Apart from such instances, however, state central committees may play an important part in the nomination of state tickets; they are the principal agencies in campaigns for the success of such tickets; and, finally, they have a great deal to say regarding the distribution of appointive offices within the gift of the governor and other state elective officials. Owing to the device of the electoral college the states are also the natural divisions of the country in presidential campaigns, and here again the state committee becomes an agency of prime importance under the general control of the national committee. Finally, as we have already noted, the state committee is often the chosen battleground of groups of powerful county and city leaders. Hence "possession of the central committee is, if not conclusive, at least presumptive evidence of party authority and control, . . . one of the external marks of sovereignty."<sup>2</sup>

State central committees

In size the 96 state committees range from 11 in Iowa to approximately 460 in California, the average being

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rule 7, *Rules of the Republican State Committee*, New York, adopted April 15, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> C. E. Merriam, "State Central Committees," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xix, pp. 224-233 (June, 1904).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

### Size of state com- mittees

from 30 to 40.<sup>1</sup> This matter is of considerable importance, for if the committee is very small it will transact most of its business directly; if it is unwieldy it must perforce depend upon executive officers and committees. Members of state central committees are chosen most commonly by counties or congressional districts, but the legislative district is used in a few cases, and there are some instances of a combination of these methods. The usual term of membership is four years, but two years is the rule in many states, and in New Jersey it is three years. Recently the tendency has been to lengthen the term of membership, thus giving greater stability to the organization. As to methods of choice of state committeemen there is no uniformity. Sometimes they are selected by delegates to the state convention from the area adopted as the unit of representation. More commonly of late they are chosen in official primary elections by direct vote of enrolled party members.

### Republican senatorial and congress- sional com- mittees

In the national field each of the major parties has three committees, two of lesser importance known as the senatorial committee and the congressional committee, respectively, the other, which is the topmost structure of the whole party organization, known as the national committee. Each of these three committees is separate and distinct in composition from the others. The Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee, which dates from 1916, is composed of seven members, appointed by the chairman of the Republican conference for a term of two years. Reappointment of members is now the common practice, however, except when it is made impossible by the unwrit-

<sup>1</sup> Other illustrations from various states and sections are as follows: Massachusetts, Republican State Committee, 2 members (one a woman) from each senatorial district, chosen at direct primary elections, total 80, term, 2 years; New York, 1 member from each assembly district, chosen at direct primary elections, total 150, term, 2 years; Pennsylvania, Republican State Committee, senatorial districts, total 113, chosen at direct primary elections, term, 2 years; Indiana, Republican State Committee, congressional districts, total 13, term, 2 years; Ohio, congressional districts, total 22, term, 2 years; Illinois, congressional districts, total 26, term, 2 years.

## ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

ten law that no Senator who is a candidate for re-election shall be a member of the committee during his own campaign.<sup>1</sup> The Republican Congressional Committee was originally formed in the late 'sixties, during the struggle with President Johnson. From 1882 to 1894, however, it was not so active as it has subsequently become. It is now made up of one member from each state which has party representation in the House, the member being chosen by the party delegation of the state. At present there are thirty-five such states.

On the Democratic side the National Senatorial Committee is composed of six Senators chosen by party caucus for a term of two years. There are no subcommittees, but a secretary-treasurer is appointed to take charge of permanent headquarters in Washington.<sup>2</sup> In the lower house each state delegation of Democrats elects one of its members to the Democratic National Congressional Committee, which is reorganized every two years. The committee chooses the usual executive officers, with the exception of a treasurer, who is appointed by the chairman. Usually the chairman is authorized to fill all vacancies in the membership of the committee and to appoint a woman to membership thereon from each state. In addition to the usual committees there is a Women's Executive Committee.<sup>3</sup> The functions of these committees and their relations to the Democratic National Committee are essentially the same as those of the corresponding committees on the Republican side.

**Democratic  
senatorial  
and congressional  
committees**

Coming now to the national committees, which are by far the most important of the permanent organs of party government in the country, we find on the Republican

**National  
committees**

<sup>1</sup> Information regarding the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee supplied by Senator George H. Moses, and regarding the Republican Congressional Committee by Representative Burton L. French.

<sup>2</sup> Information regarding the Democratic National Senatorial Committee supplied by Mr. Frank A. Hampton, secretary-treasurer of the committee.

<sup>3</sup> Information regarding the Democratic National Congressional Committee supplied by Mr. D. K. Hempstead, assistant secretary of the committee.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

side a body composed of one man from each state, together with one from each of the following: District of Columbia, Alaska, Philippine Islands, Porto Rico, and Hawaii, making 53 all together. The Democratic National Committee is composed of one man and one woman from each state and from each of the territories named above, with the addition of the Canal Zone, making a total of 108. Members of the national committees are chosen for a term of four years, sometimes by the delegation from a given state to the national convention, sometimes by the state convention itself, and in increasing numbers of recent years by direct-primary elections.

### Officers of national committees

As in the case of party committees generally, the national committee elects its own executive officers, with the important exception, however, that the presidential nominee of the party is permitted to name the national chairman. This practice is due to the conviction that the nominee has the greatest single stake involved in the campaign and should therefore be given the privilege of choosing as his chief of staff a man in whose loyalty and efficiency he has entire confidence. During a campaign the responsibilities of the chairman of a national committee are enormous. The most successful recent incumbents in this office have been Marcus A. Hanna, George B. Cortelyou, Vance McCormick, and Will Hays. In case of victory at the polls the national chairman and the more important members of his committee become important factors in the distribution of federal patronage. The successful national chairman may himself be rewarded with a Cabinet position, usually that of the Post Office Department, owing to the patronage involved. Of course he and the more important of his committeemen may be consulted also in matters of policy by the President they have helped to elect. Hanna was perhaps the most influential of all national chairmen in the latter respect. In general, however, national committees relapse into a state of comparative inactivity following a presidential campaign, not resuming their labors as a body until late in the year

## ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

preceding the next election. Pronouncements on the policy of the administration from this source are distinctly unusual, the occurrences of this kind during the present year (1923) being merely exceptions to the general rule. Following the campaign of 1912 an effort was made by the Progressive party organization to continue its organization and particularly its propaganda work, but with little success. For a great many people "politics is adjourned" following an election, and for a considerable time at least they wish to hear as little as possible about the organization and its plans.

Even the defeated chairman and committee are not without importance, owing to their powers in organizing the party and arranging the preliminaries for the next national convention. The functions performed by national committees in this connection and during campaigns are discussed in later chapters.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these greater labors national committees sometimes make important suggestions regarding party organization and policies. Thus, between 1913 and 1921 the Republican National Committee worked out the original plans for the reform of representation in conventions of that party. At its February meeting in 1919, the Democratic National Committee provided for the appointment of associate women members and adopted a resolution favoring a constitutional amendment "to prevent any discrimination in the elective franchise on account of sex."<sup>2</sup> Following this action the Democratic national convention of 1920 admitted women to full membership in the National Committee.

Functions  
of national  
committees

In the line of campaign activities the principal function of the senatorial and congressional committees of the two major parties is to secure the election of the largest possible number of party candidates to Congress. During presidential years, of course, the fate of many congres-

Campaign  
activities  
of national  
committees

<sup>1</sup> See chaps. xi and xii.

<sup>2</sup> *Official Report, Proceedings Democratic National Convention, 1920, Appendix, pp. 494-519.*



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

sional contests depends upon the sweep of the national ticket. Even in mid-term elections, when the senatorial and congressional committees are most active, the influence of the President as party leader must be consulted. Hence the general attitude of the senatorial and congressional committees is that of co-operation with the national committee. None of the three is given authority over the other, but the national committee is immensely the more efficient in the raising of money, the distribution of literature, and the conduct of campaign activities generally.

Importance  
of national  
committees

The overshadowing importance of the national committees in the two great parties is due to the fact that they are responsible for the conduct of the campaign for the election of a President and Vice-President, with all its fateful consequences. Upon victory in such campaigns depends the result not only of many congressional, but of many state and local, contests as well; the control of the federal executive for the four ensuing years; the patronage at its disposal and the influence it may be able to exert upon legislation and administration. A fairly reliable index of the effectiveness of party committees is afforded by the amount of money at their disposal. In the presidential campaign of 1920 the funds handled by the Democratic and Republican national committees were considerably in excess of the combined funds of the senatorial, congressional, and state committees of the same parties.<sup>1</sup>

Representa-  
tion on  
party com-  
mittees

In the foregoing description of party committees of every rank it was noted that as a rule representation is based equally upon certain territorial units. This plan has the advantage of securing the widest possible geographical distribution of party representation. It suffers, however, from the manifest defect that it takes no account of the actual voting strength of the party in the districts concerned. In a few exceptional cases efforts have been made to give due weight to the latter factor. Thus according to the New York election law (§ 12), county committees shall consist of at least two members from each

<sup>1</sup> For detailed figures, see chap. xiii.

## ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

election district and of such additional members as the rules of the party may provide, proportional to the party vote in the district for governor at the last preceding election. If no additional members are provided for by the rules the voting power of each member of the committee shall be proportionate to such party vote. Illinois provides that in the county committee each precinct committeeman shall have one vote plus one additional vote for each fifty votes or major fraction thereof of his party cast in his precinct for governor at the last general election.<sup>1</sup> However, these exceptional cases merely prove the general rule of representation by geographical districts regardless of the party vote therein. Whatever injustice may thus be done to "solid" districts is apparently considered to be more than compensated by the encouragement given to districts where the party vote is lighter by the plan of equal representation.

With the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment political parties were brought face to face with the problem of making room within their official hierarchies for representatives of women voters. Considering the large addition made to the electorate by the suffrage amendment, this was a problem of the first importance. Also it was fraught with danger, for if any considerable number of women should be estranged as a result of failure to give them proper recognition, the results to the offending party might be most serious. Prior to this time party leaders had given scant attention to the subject of feminine psychology, and, conscious of this deficiency, they approached the problem with some trepidation.

In the few years that have elapsed since the adoption of the suffrage amendment in 1920, various plans for the representation of women on party committees have been experimented with by both parties. These plans fall into three main classes: (1) the establishment of purely auxiliary committees of women; (2) the opening up of existing offices in the party hierarchy to both men and women

**Representa-  
tion of  
women  
voters on  
party com-  
mittees**

**Three plans  
for the rep-  
resentation  
of women**

<sup>1</sup> Revised Statutes, 1921, § 373, chap. xlv, p. 876.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

on equal terms; and (3) the requirement that women should be seated in equal numbers with men on party committees. It must not be inferred that a clear-cut, logical application has been made of any one of these plans anywhere. On the contrary, they have been combined apparently without rhyme or reason throughout the party structure. In the resulting chaos it is possible to find within the same party and even within the same state one of these plans applying to one committee and another to others. Nevertheless, some progress has been made, and out of the present welter of experimentation a fairly definite and uniform solution should soon emerge.

### Auxiliary committees of women

With regard to the advantages and disadvantages of the three plans now under trial some general observations may be made. The establishment of purely auxiliary committees composed wholly of women was a quite natural expedient. For time out of mind it had been the practice of the officials and committees making up the regular party organization to encourage the formation of *ad hoc* bodies for every emergency or special purpose. During campaigns the multiplication of such bodies goes on apace and their loyal and enthusiastic aid becomes of great value. There is, however, little analogy between such temporary campaign committees and the representation of women voters in the party organization. The latter is not an emergency, but a continuous function, general rather than specific in character—in short, an opportunity not merely to serve, but to govern as well. Whether so intended or not, the plan of separate women's committees lends itself readily to the suspicion that the regular party committees composed entirely of men purpose retaining all the more important functions and emoluments of organization control in their own hands. As long as women were unfranchised they might have been content, at least they were perforce content, with membership on "auxiliaries" and "ladies' aid" societies. But with full enfranchisement such second-class opportunities merely to take orders and to serve must soon become distasteful to them. And as voters in

## ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

their own right they are likely to demand real instead of sham representation in the party organization.

Opening up all party offices to men and women on equal terms—the second plan for representation of women voters in the party organization—may seem at first sight simple, practical, and ideally fair. Apparently no one questions the justice of this arrangement as applied to elective public offices. Hence when women were finally given the vote on the same terms as men they were in general held to be entitled to hold public office on the same terms as men. In effect this meant that they might attain to official power and emoluments provided they could defeat men in open contest for the same. There have been a number of creditable individual successes under this system as applied to public offices. However, a cursory examination of the proportion of women in Congress, state legislatures, city councils, and in elective administrative and judicial offices generally will show that it represents an infinitesimally small fraction of the proportion of the vote cast by women in popular elections.

Equal opportunities  
for women

Application of the same rule to all party offices would doubtless have had much the same effect. Possibly women might have secured a larger proportion of the latter because they carry no salaries and hence are less eagerly desired by men. In some cases at the same time women were made eligible for party offices on equal terms with men the number of such offices was doubled, with the understanding that room would thus be made for women without dislodging any male incumbents. Undoubtedly this arrangement makes it considerably easier for women to secure something like their proportion of party offices. Nevertheless it leaves them at a considerable disadvantage in practice. Male politicians "know the ropes" and male voters participate in primaries and elections to a much larger percentage of their registration than women voters. In spite of the fact that full suffrage rights were granted to women in 1920, there remains from the preceding epoch a deep-seated prejudice among many men, and not a few

Results in  
practice

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

women also, against active participation by the latter in politics. If applied generally, therefore, this plan would have left party control in the hands of committees on which men held large majorities and in all probability this condition would continue indefinitely.

Disadvantages of the equal-opportunity plan

No doubt such a result would have been eminently satisfactory to all those who object to the active participation of women in politics. From the point of view of general party policy, however, it suffers from the disadvantage that sooner or later it is bound to provoke the criticism and opposition of women who take the privilege of the suffrage seriously. Moreover, if one of the parties worked out a plan securing a more nearly equal representation of women on its committees this fact might be used with some effect upon the disgruntled women voters of other parties. A system of party organization which predisposes any considerable element in the party membership to revolt is, of course, very defective. Parties have long recognized this fact and, as a consequence, have usually shown themselves eager to conciliate any considerable body of voters regardless of strict theories of representation in proportion to numbers. Thus national conventions welcomed delegates from territories, insular possessions, and the District of Columbia, although none of these is represented in the electoral college. For a long time the over-representation of Southern states in Republican national conventions was defended on the ground that it encouraged the rank and file of the party in that section to make a valiant fight against great odds. Western state conventions have received delegations of Indians and the foreign-born with every mark of distinguished consideration.<sup>1</sup> In short, the policy generally followed has been based on the consideration that, like politeness, generosity in according party recognition costs little and may be counted upon to bring in rich rewards on election day.

The third plan—that of dividing committee places equally between men and women—not only attempts the

<sup>1</sup> For an amusing illustration see A. H. Shaw, *Story of a Pioneer*, p. 249.



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generous attitude, it makes such an attitude mandatory. In all cases known to the writer it begins by doubling the number of committee places. This has the advantage that men holding committee places are left undisturbed, but it has the disadvantage of making some of the committees unwieldy. In districts largely inhabited by naturalized foreigners the plan requiring equal representation of the sexes has been objected to on the ground that it displeases many men voters and is not desired by most of the women voters. Nearly everywhere, of course, women do not as yet participate in elections as freely as men. The number of women who work actively in politics is much smaller than that of men so engaged. To the extent that these conditions prevail it is, of course, true that the mandatory assignment of an equal number of places on party committees to women results in the over-representation of voters of that sex. On the other hand, it may be claimed for this policy that it gives every possible encouragement to women to participate in political work as freely as men do. From the campaign point of view the adoption of this policy by a party in advance of its rivals may succeed in attracting to it a certain voting strength. Other parties which may wish to bid for the same support will find it awkward to offer women voters a less measure of party representation and quite out of the question to offer them more.

Equal division of committee places between men and women

Representation of women on party committees even to an equal extent with men does not dispose of all the difficulties in this connection. Committees may, as we have seen, have very little real power. Officers of committees, particularly county and state chairmen, may have very great powers. To make room for women on committees by doubling their membership was scarcely any trouble at all. Obviously, however, this device can not be applied to the more important executive offices provided for by party rules. For men to monopolize all such places would, of course, cause trouble sooner or later, probably sooner. To give the offices of chairman, secretary and treasurer to

Women in party offices

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

men and the offices of vice-chairman and assistant secretary to women does not impress one as a permanent solution, either.<sup>1</sup> If the principle of equality of opportunity is to be regarded in this connection women should be made eligible to the more important executive offices on the same terms as men, with the further proviso that when the chief of two positions is filled by a representative of one sex the second place should go to a representative of the other sex.

### Pennsylvania methods

Some conception of the way these various plans of representation have been combined in practice may be gained from the following brief summary of conditions in the state of Pennsylvania. Beginning with Delaware County, the author's residence, women of both major parties are given equal representation on the county committee, but the principal executive offices are held by men. Practice with regard to the representation of women on county committees is not uniform throughout the state, however. Democratic women have an equal right to compete with men for places on the state committee of that party, the result being that at present they make up about a third of its membership. The Republican party has adopted a rule providing that each senatorial district shall elect one male and one female member of the state committee.<sup>2</sup> In both parties the post of state chairman is held by a man—a condition which exists at present throughout the Union. Coming now to the national committees, the Democratic party has provided since 1920 for one man and one woman member from each state. Until recently there have been no women members of the Republican National Committee, but according to a press report of June 26, 1923 Chairman Adams asked each member of the committee to nominate a woman of his state to serve as an associate member.<sup>2</sup> To offset somewhat its failure to recognize

<sup>1</sup> This provision is made by the *Rules of the Republican Party of the State of Pennsylvania, adopted June 18, 1921*, i, § 4.

<sup>2</sup> According to news reports from the Republican National Convention held at Cleveland, June 10th to 12th, 1924, women have been admitted to full and equal membership in the national committee of that party.

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women equally the Republican National Committee has an executive committee of nineteen members, eight of whom are women. The nine executive offices of the Democratic National Committee are held by men, with the exception of two vice-chairmanships. Men hold all the eight executive offices of the Republican National Committee except one assistant vice-chairmanship and one assistant secretaryship.

Third parties in the United States have organized themselves, as a rule, along the same lines as majority parties. In geographical extent and in effectiveness, however, such organizations fall far short of their great prototypes. The Socialist party alone differs considerably from the old parties in form and functioning. It possesses a written constitution which sets up a degree of centralized control not formally recognized in other American parties, modified somewhat by the democratic processes of the initiative, referendum, and recall.<sup>1</sup> The constitution also makes provision for foreign-speaking federations within the party, for the Young People's Socialist League, for propaganda among women, and for the sending of delegates to international Socialist conferences.

Organiza-  
tion of  
third parties

All persons joining the Socialist party must sign an application pledging themselves to its principles, renouncing all relations with other parties, and agreeing to be guided in their political actions by the constitution and platform of the party. Payment of regular monthly dues is also required as a condition of retaining membership and participating in party affairs. Members residing in a given district to the number of five or more form party "locals." In some large cities the locals are assigned to branches according to assembly districts. No state or territory may be organized unless it has at least ten locals or an aggregate membership of not less than two hundred. In states which qualify under this rule state committees are set up which must make monthly reports to the national secretary

Membership  
and locals in  
the Socialist  
party

<sup>1</sup> *National Constitution and Platform of the Socialist Party*, published by the National Office of the Party, Chicago, 1917.

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and co-operate with the national office in the sale of dues stamps.

National organs of the Socialist party

In the national field the authorities of the Socialist party are the National Executive Committee, the national convention, and the general vote of the party. The National Executive Committee is composed of fifteen members, three chosen by vote of the party members in each of the five territorial districts into which the country is divided. The term of a committeeman is two years. Like other officials of the party, national committeemen are subject to the recall. A permanent chairman is chosen by the National Executive Committee, apparently, however, merely to comply with the federal Corrupt Practices Act. The constitution provides also for a paid executive secretary.

Officers of the Socialist party

One interesting peculiarity of the Socialist party organization is the opposition to permanent presiding officers. It is feared that they may absorb too many powers, contrary to the democratic ideal of the party. The almost invariable practice is to choose a temporary chairman for each meeting. As a result "the inexperienced and incapable is called upon to take his turn at presiding; not only is free speech maintained, but the loquacious orator is suffered indefinitely before the gavel falls."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the Socialist party employs permanent organizers, lecturers, and secretaries to a greater degree in proportion to its size than any other party. Assisted by numerous volunteers and the party press, these paid workers carry on a vigorous propaganda, which, unlike that of the major parties, is not confined to political campaigns, but is continuous.<sup>2</sup>

National conventions of the Socialist party

National conventions of the Socialist party are called by the executive committee, regular conventions being held in all years during which presidential elections occur, and

<sup>1</sup> On this and other details of the organization and work of the Socialist party the reader should consult the excellent account presented by J. W. Hughan, *American Socialism of the Present Day*, pp. 204-220.

<sup>2</sup> See R. Hunter, "The Socialist Party in the Present Campaign," *Review of Reviews*, vol. xxxviii, pp. 293-299 (Sept., 1908).

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special conventions at any other time if decided upon by a general vote of the party membership or by a two-thirds vote of the National Executive Committee. An emergency convention of the latter sort was held at St. Louis in April, 1917, at which the party placed itself on record with regard to the impending war.<sup>1</sup> Socialist national conventions are made up of two hundred delegates, one from each state and territory, the remainder being apportioned according to the average national dues paid during the preceding year. Delegates to national conventions and also to international congresses receive their traveling expenses and a modest per-diem from party funds.

The platform adopted at the Socialist national convention is "the supreme declaration of the party, and all state and municipal platforms shall conform thereto." Before it goes into effect, however, it must be submitted to a referendum vote of the membership. One fourth of the regularly elected delegates to a convention shall be entitled to have alternative paragraphs submitted at the same time. In addition to the obligatory referendum thus provided for on the platform, the party constitution also establishes the initiative for motions or resolutions to be voted upon by the entire membership of the party. These may be brought forward upon the request of locals representing five per cent of the dues-paying membership. Initiated amendments to the constitution require eight per cent. It is the opinion of a recognized authority on American socialism that "owing to a recent decision to hold party referendums open indefinitely for the requisite indorsements, the referendum has become so frequent as to lose much of its value as an expression of deliberate opinion."<sup>2</sup>

In years when national conventions are not held the Socialist party constitution provides for an organization conference composed of the national committeemen, the executive secretary, state secretaries, and others. This conference is confined to problems of administration,

Socialist  
platforms  
and referen-  
dum votes

Socialist  
organization  
conferences

<sup>1</sup> See B. Benedict, *The Larger Socialism*, chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> J. W. Hughan, *op. cit.*, p. 210.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

propaganda, and organization, and shall neither initiate nor suggest legislation or constitutional amendments.

Socialist  
party disci-  
pline

While individual members of the Socialist party are entitled to participate in party activities to a degree unknown in the older organizations, they are also subjected by the constitution to certain rather drastic restrictions. Thus "no member of the Socialist party shall, under any circumstances, vote in any political election for any candidate other than Socialist party members nominated, indorsed, or recommended as candidates by the Socialist party, or advocate voting for them. To do so constitutes party treason and will result in expulsion from the party."

Socialist  
rules re-  
garding  
candidates

Formerly it was a Socialist custom to require candidates to submit signed but undated resignations from the offices to which they aspired. In case of disloyalty to party principles by office holders these resignations were dated and presented to the proper authority.<sup>1</sup> "No party member may be a candidate for public office without the consent of the city, county, or state organizations, according to the nature of the office." Party membership of at least two years' duration is also a prerequisite for Socialist nomination or indorsement, exception being made, however, in the case of organizations which have been in existence less than two years. Socialist candidates are not permitted to accept any nomination or indorsement from any other party or political organization. "No state or local organization shall under any circumstances fuse, combine, or compromise with any other political party or organization, or refrain from making nominations in order to favor the candidate of such other organizations." The foregoing rules are by no means dead letters. Censure and expulsion are used drastically to purge the party of undesired elements.

Rules apply-  
ing to So-  
cialists in  
office

Certain restrictions and duties are also imposed upon Socialists in office by the party constitution. Voting by such persons to appropriate moneys for military or naval

<sup>1</sup> For an interesting illustration of the use of such resignations, see J. W. Hughan, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

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purposes, or war, is punishable by expulsion from the party. Socialist representatives in Congress must submit reports of their official actions to the national convention. "In the support of measures proposed by the Socialist party they shall carry out instructions which may be given by the national conventions, the National Executive Committee or by a general referendum of the party." In all legislative bodies Socialist members shall organize into a group separate and apart from other parties and shall vote as a unit in support of all measures definitely declared for in the platforms of the party. Like every other rule of human conduct, the Socialist policy of isolation is not without its exceptions. Should the party increase in voting strength and representation, these exceptions will doubtless become more frequent.<sup>1</sup>

In all parties political committees are provided with the usual executive officers—chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer—elected, as a rule, by the committee itself. In addition the larger political committees appoint a number of special committees, the more common being an executive committee, a finance committee, and a committee on vacancies, with perhaps one or two others of a miscellaneous character. For example, the Massachusetts State Republican Committee maintains a legislative committee, an Americanization committee, and a registration committee. Frequently auxiliary committees are appointed composed of women or men who are not members of the regular committee.

Officers of  
party committees  
generally

Among the various party officers named above, the most important is usually the chairman. As we have already noted, the chairman of a county committee is frequently the dominant political figure in his county. Somewhat less frequently the chairman of a state committee is able to play the same rôle on his wider stage. In any event, his office is of great strategic importance. The chairman of a finance committee, particularly one whose

Importance  
of party  
chairmen

<sup>1</sup> For discussion of the Socialist policy of isolation, see J. W. Hughan, *op. cit.*, p. 214; M. Hillquit, *Socialism in Theory and Practice*, p. 176.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

personal connections permit him to tap certain large sources of campaign revenue, is also in a position to wield great influence.

Party rules  
and legisla-  
tion

Until quite recently the composition of party committees, and their functioning as well, were provided for by rules adopted by the committees themselves. To some extent this condition has been modified by the enactment of state laws on the subject.<sup>1</sup> So far as the composition of party committees is concerned, these laws did little more than to unify and legitimize the conditions established under party rules. However, one change of great importance was made by the application of the direct-primary method of election to members of party committees. Even fewer modifications were made by these state laws in the functioning of party committees. Thus the Illinois law merely provides that they shall have "the powers usually exercised by such committees," and that they shall not delegate them. Of these two clauses the first simply continues the *status quo ante*, but if the second were to be enforced it would work a profound change in party management. The New York law (§ 15) contains an interesting requirement to the effect that "every state and county committee shall within fifteen days after its election meet and organize by the election of a chairman, treasurer, and secretary, and such other officers as its rules may provide, and within three days thereafter file with the secretary of state and the board of elections of the county a certificate stating the names and post-office addresses of such officers."

Details of  
party rules

In general the rules of party committees are much more extended and explicit than the laws so far enacted on this subject. They provide in detail for the election of officers and committees, the distribution of powers among them, and for the transaction of business by the whole committee, the latter in accordance with the generally recognized

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Illinois Rev. Stat., 1921, §§ 372-373; General Laws of Massachusetts, vol. i, 1921, chap. lii; New York Election Laws §§ 10-17; Ohio General Code, Throckmorton, 1921, §§ 4959-4962.

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methods of parliamentary practice. Two or three only of the functions of party committees are of so peculiar a character as to deserve special mention. Thus it is not uncommon to find a rule providing for the ousting of members of the committee who have been convicted of disloyalty to the party or ticket. A provision of this character is even included in the New York Election Law, § 16. It covers corruption in office as well as disloyalty to the party. The *Rules Governing the Republican Party of Delaware County, Pa.*, require all members of the county executive committee to pledge support to the entire county ticket as nominated at the last primary election. In case a member shall refuse to make this pledge the county executive committee shall declare his place vacant and proceed to elect another qualified Republican from the same precinct to take his place. Of greater importance than the foregoing are the rules providing for the filling of vacancies occurring in the ticket by death or otherwise after the convention or direct primary election has been held. In some cases this function is performed by the committee as a whole, in others it is intrusted to a special "committee on vacancies." Finally, in those states or districts where the direct-primary election system has completely supplanted the convention it is not uncommon to find rules empowering the party committee to draft a platform.

One may read all the laws and rules on the subject of party committees, however, and still have a very incorrect idea of the actual location of power therein. Functions assigned to the committee as a whole may in given instances be exercised to all practical intents and purposes by the chairman or the executive committee. Or the real reins of power may be in the hands of various public office holders who have no official connection with the system of committees. At all times the national committee must give the most careful consideration to the wishes of the President whom the party has elevated to power. The views of influential leaders of the party in Congress must also be taken

Actual  
location of  
power in  
party com-  
mittees

into account, whether or not they are members of the committee. Between a governor and leaders in the legislature, on the one hand, and the state committee, on the other, the same general relationship exists. In counties and cities the party organization is more likely to dominate public office holders, but a mayor of force and character may reverse this situation. Individual party members of powerful personality and wide popularity must also be reckoned with by party officials. Bryan's influence over the Democratic party ever since his first nomination in 1896 is the most conspicuous recent example of personal influence in the national field. Whether in or out of public office, men like Cleveland, Wilson, Roosevelt, Root, Taft, and Hughes are able to exercise a notable influence upon the conduct of affairs by party office holders. Finally, in cases where a well-organized machine has been set up actual leadership may be found concealed within or even quite outside the official party structure. The boss may prefer to remain a private member of the committee and yet be able to dominate its every move. Sometimes, indeed, he prefers to have no official connection whatever with the committee, controlling its actions through trusted lieutenants who hold all the strategic offices in the party organization.

**Distribution  
of powers  
between  
committees**

Similar indefiniteness exists regarding the actual distribution of powers as between committees of different rank in the party hierarchy. In fact, the word hierarchy itself is somewhat misleading in this connection. The national committees of the major parties have no power of compulsion over the state committees nor the latter over county committees. In cases of factional disturbance it is not uncommon to find the party leaders and organizations of a group of counties vigorously fighting the state organization controlled by another group of leaders of the same party. On the other hand, every effort is made during campaigns to secure "harmony," and a united front, in appearance at least, is presented as against the opposing party. At all times, and particularly during campaigns, the hope of obtaining funds from committees higher up is



## ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

a powerful factor in securing co-operation. The interlocking of committees of lower rank with those of higher rank through membership of leaders of the former in the higher committees is also a useful factor in securing concerted action. In the last analysis much depends upon the spirit of unity in the party rank and file. Considering all these factors, it is clear that in general a remarkable degree of co-operation is actually obtained from the top to the bottom of the party structure.

Party committeemen of whatever rank in the hierarchy of the major parties receive no salaries as such. There are, however, a few salaried positions in connection with the permanent headquarters maintained by a small number of the more important committees. In some cases the expenses incurred by committeemen in attendance at meetings are defrayed out of party funds. Usually, therefore, membership in the governing organization of a party entails some expenditure both of money and of time. Demands upon the time of party officers vary greatly. In large cities there are many workers from precinct leaders up who "do politics 365 days in the year," as the saying is. Except during campaigns, however, the great majority of party officials give a small part of their time only to political activities, depending for a livelihood upon some business or professional pursuit of their own. Of course in case of party victory many committeemen are rewarded by election or appointment to public office carrying a salary. And under machine control the holding of party office may be made lucrative in many shady ways. There can be no doubt, however, that a considerable proportion of the men and women serving in minor party offices the country over do so without hope of material reward, largely because of devotion to party principles or out of sheer "love of the game."

The motive of spoils and pelf is, therefore, far from being the only one that animates this vast and complicated mechanism of parties. That it is too prominent is equally beyond question. In general the personnel of party com-

Material re-  
wards of  
party office

Other mo-  
tives for  
service on  
party com-  
mittees

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mittees is distinctly inferior to that of the holders of public elective offices. Of course the latter are salaried and therefore the competition for them is much more strenuous. It is this competition, by the way, which selects the abler or more ambitious holders of party office for public preferment, leaving the less able or less ambitious in mere party positions. Also candidates for and incumbents in public office are subjected to a much more severe public scrutiny and criticism than holders of party office.

Improve-  
ment of per-  
sonnel of  
party com-  
mittees

After all, it is not county, but party, government which is the "darkest Africa" of American politics. Elihu Root's use of the phrase "invisible government" in this connection was fully justified. A large number of changes of method—the direct primary, corrupt practices acts, and the like—have been made with the hope of improving this neglected area. But a change of personnel is more greatly needed than any mere changes of method. If able and disinterested men and women could be induced to stand for party offices generally there is every reason to believe that the whole level of our public life would be raised materially.

### BOOK NOTES

THE *Rules and Regulations* of political committees of every description are the best documentary materials for the study of the formal organization of parties. These are printed in limited numbers for the use of committee members, but copies may usually be secured by correspondence with their chairmen or secretaries. In this pursuit unlimited persistence and a little "influence" are a necessary part of the collector's equipment. A list of the state chairmen of both parties is published annually in the *World Almanac*.

All the general works on political parties cited in the Book Notes under Ch. I devote more or less space to the organization of political parties, those by Ostrogorski and J. Macy being particularly full on this topic. C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*, Ch. III (1922),

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presents a brief general account followed by a penetrating analysis of presidential, congressional, gubernatorial, and unofficial leadership. H. Croly, *Marcus Alonzo Hanna*, Chs. XVI *et seq.* (1912), narrates in detail the operations of one of the most influential national chairmen of recent times. Of all the many treatises on the Socialist party, J. W. Hughan, *American Socialism of the Present Day* (1911), gives the most informing account of the party's organization and its workings.

## CHAPTER IX

### MACHINES AND BOSSES

Rousseau  
on govern-  
ing officials

IN a striking passage of the *Social Contract*,<sup>1</sup> Rousseau points out that a governing official is dominated by three wills; first, his particular will as an individual which tends only to his private advantage; second, the will that is common to him as one of the governing body, tending to the advantage of that body; and, third, the will of the people or the sovereign will. An ideal system of government would reduce the will of the individual to a nullity, the will of the governing body to subordinate proportions, and exalt the will of the people as ruler and sole director of the others. Human nature being what it is, however, each member of the administration thinks of himself first as an individual, second as a magistrate, and lastly as a citizen.

Illustrated  
in party  
government

The principle thus enunciated by Rousseau finds many striking illustrations in the field of party government. Given organizations of such enormous extent as those described in the preceding chapter, wielding great but ill-defined and ill-regulated powers, it is inevitable that self-seeking and political class interests should manifest themselves at every turn. Theoretically party government exists to give effect to the will of the majority of party adherents, who desire, presumably, the best interests of the state. To a large extent it actually does this. Certainly no party organization can stand for any length of time against a definite determination on the part of its rank and file. But such definite determinations are exceptional, the characteristic attitude of the rank and file

<sup>1</sup> Book iii, chap. ii.

## MACHINES AND BOSSES

on many issues is apathetic, hence the wide area within which party officials may move in their own interests.

Names and  
nicknames  
of machine  
rule

So clearly marked is this self-seeking feature of American party politics that various names and nicknames—organization, machine, gang, ring, boss—have been evolved popularly to characterize the agencies and degrees of participation in it. The word “organization” is colorless morally; it connotes power and discipline to the general public, and to the politician loyalty, hence the latter uses it proudly and takes great care to preserve, at least outwardly, his regularity as an organization man at all times. Briefly, the organization is the system of permanent party committees as a whole, or that part of the system which is confined to a given state, county, or city. In addition to greater centralization of power and discipline the term “machine” connotes use of the organization to an end outside of its proper purposes, hence perversion to some degree. A political machine may be defined as a party organization within which one or a few men have gained a degree of control, particularly over nominations, elections, and appointments to office and the official conduct of incumbents, sufficient to enable them to pursue their own ends alongside with or even to some extent contrary to those of the party. Needless to say the term is loosely employed, a Republican organization man easily perceiving the turpitude of the Democratic machine, and *vice versa*. It involves some degree of reproach, although it is on record that Platt was visibly pleased when on the floor of a state convention one of his opponents declared that, considering how smoothly and irresistibly it operated, he must run his machine with electricity.

Among faithful followers the men who dominate a machine are respectfully referred to as leaders. To their opponents they are collectively the “gang” or the “ring.” Both these terms indicate a determination to dominate by fair means or foul. “Gang,” as, for example, in the famous Pennsylvania marching song, is the broader term, including all who participate in machine processes and

“Gangs” and  
“rings”



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in perquisites, the small-fry politicians along with the dominant figures. "Ring," on the other hand, refers to the inner circle of the machine, those who plan and control on a large scale nominations, campaigns, elections, appointments, and the conduct in public and party office of their henchmen. The most notorious rings in the history of the country were the Tweed Ring in the Tammany machine of New York, and the Gas Ring in the Republican machine of Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup>

The "boss"

Like all oligarchies, rings are peculiarly liable to internal strife. Composed of masterful personalities, jealous of one another's power and always dissatisfied with their share of the spoils, dissensions among them sometimes result in the elevating of a dominant figure, the "boss." Subject to internal disorders, a ring may exist without a boss, but no boss has ever succeeded without a ring to support and assist him. Of course the methods and morals of a boss are largely those of the ring, the former rendered somewhat more efficient by centralization of power in the hands of one man, the latter clarified slightly perhaps by his greater responsibility and intelligence.

Causes of  
bossism

Oligarchies have made their presence felt commonly enough in the parties of Europe, but the boss and the machine are typical American products. Many reasons have been advanced for this untoward development. Rapid territorial development, prodigality of nature, the growth of wealth and general diffusion of material well-being, have drawn the attention of our citizens from government to the economic conquest of nature. Our favorable geographical situation, aloof from threat of war and invasion, has made us indifferent to one powerful motive for government efficiency. Immigration has made our population heterogeneous, thus enabling designing politicians to appeal to race prejudice. Certain political practices and ideas fixed during the Jacksonian period—the spoils system, ro-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, pt. v, chaps. lxxxviii and lxxxix; G. Myers, *The History of Tammany Hall*, chaps. xxiii-xxv; S. P. Orth, *The Boss and the Machine*, pp. 72-80, 93-98.

## MACHINES AND BOSSES

tation in office, the choice of as many public officials as possible by election—have undoubtedly contributed to the growth of the machine. The fear of a strong administration, extant from the beginning of our national life, enables the corruptionist to temper law enforcement at innumerable points to his private advantage. The doctrine of the separation of powers and check and balance among them, also a legacy from the Fathers, has been carried to so extreme an extent in state and municipal government as to make almost necessary and inevitable the intervention of a powerful and highly centralized outside political control. There is a wide discrepancy between the balance of power, financial and industrial on the one side, political on the other. Great combinations of capital enormously strong economically, but weak in voting power, face great popular masses, weak economically, but strong in voting power. Out of the corporate desire for privileges, many of them unwarranted, and out of the popular desire for regulation, also perhaps pushed too far, the boss is equally able to make a profit. As a minor consequence of the last-named condition many of America's most efficient men of affairs find their personal interests bound up with those of the machine and are therefore hostile to good government movements. In European countries, on the other hand, there is a tradition of disinterested public service among men of wealth and leisure.

In a vivid paragraph Ostrogorski has given a picture of the geographical extent of machine rule in this country, as follows:

**Geographi-  
cal extent of  
machine  
rule**

If on the map of the United States all the parts of the country where the machine has developed were colored red, the eye would at once be attracted to the right by a large blotch formed by the states of New York and Pennsylvania with a strip of the state of New Jersey on the east, with the state of Maryland on the south, and the state of Ohio on the west, partly at least. This mass casts a faint shadow to the northeast over New England, while on the other side, to the west, the red will appear in more or less deep tints in the state of Illinois, and will stain the neighboring states,

marking with scarlet points most of the large cities, such as St. Louis in Missouri and others of less importance, like Louisville in Kentucky or Minneapolis in Minnesota, and other smaller places among the large cities; then, after making a brief pause in the states of the Far West and leaving some patches there, it will flow toward the Pacific slope and deposit a thick layer of carmine on San Francisco; and, finally, jumping right over to the Gulf of Mexico, it will cover New Orleans with a similar layer. A very considerable space will be left hardly colored at all or will even exhibit the shot color to be seen in certain fabrics: these are regions or cities where the machine has no stable and regular existence; rings of mercenary politicians form in them, disappear after a short time, and re-form under favorable circumstances. A good many points again on the map will appear almost white. It must not be forgotten, however, that the part of the map colored red, while only a fraction of the whole country, contains almost a third of the population of the United States and represents at least three-fifths of its economic interests.<sup>1</sup>

#### No national bosses

Numerous as are the cities and states within which the machine has prevailed, it is a fact of prime importance that to date bossism has not developed within the federal structure. From time to time powerful oligarchic groups have been formed within the Senate. One such group was able to fight President Johnson to a standstill. Subsequently the "Old Guard" under Aldrich, the Penrose group, and other cabals and "blocs" have exercised considerable influence. However, none of these combinations has attained anything like the power and permanence of the typical state or city machine. During McKinley's administration Mark Hanna was frequently referred to as a national boss, but the statement did gross injustice not only to the underlying political facts, but also to the personal relationship of the two men.<sup>2</sup> Hanna was not even a boss either in Cleveland or Ohio, as his numerous local struggles sufficiently attest. As collector of party funds, as campaign manager and organizer of victory in the cam-

<sup>1</sup> *Democracy and the Party System in the United States*, p. 266, with acknowledgment of the courtesy of The Macmillan Company.

<sup>2</sup> H. Croly, *Marcus Alonzo Hanna*, especially chap. xvii *et seq.*

paings of 1896 and 1900, as Senator, and finally as an industrial leader greatly trusted by his associates, Hanna did undoubtedly wield an exceptional personal influence during McKinley's Presidency. To speak of it as amounting to bossism is, however, quite beside the mark. The truth is that the powers and patronage vested in the Presidency of the United States are so enormous that no group of state leaders within his own party can hope to prevail against him by *force majeure*. The Conkling episode under Garfield is a case in point. A weak executive might succumb to machine influence tactfully exercised, but a President of strong will can fight efforts to control him with some of the most potent weapons in the armory of politics. The overwhelming importance of the President's functions, the blinding glare of publicity constantly beating upon him, the presence in his entourage of national leaders not of the machine variety, all combine to place him above the sinister control to which governors and mayors have so often fallen victim.

It is customary to distinguish bosses according to the nature of the territories in which they operate. Thus, according to Professor Merriam, "there is the rural boss, the urban boss, the state-wide rural or urban, or urban-rural boss."<sup>1</sup> While it is the popular practice to attach a territorial appellation to the title of a boss, this may be somewhat misleading. No state boss, it is safe to say, and few city bosses have ever been free from factional disaffection or open revolt in some portion of their bailiwicks. Thus the Vare brothers, long known as the "Dukes of South Philadelphia," ruled unchallenged in that section of the city, but were bitterly opposed by Penrose and independent forces in the western and northern wards. Among practical politicians a more exact definition of the extent of the influence of a boss is sometimes employed, consisting of a list of the party and public offices known to be under his control. Thus at the death of "Ed" Vare, the older and more powerful of the brothers, the following list of

Kinds of  
bosses

<sup>1</sup> *The American Party System*, p. 174.

public offices and office holders under his control was published without a word of contradiction from those concerned: "a working majority in City Council, four out of six Philadelphia representatives in Congress, five out of eight state senators, thirty-three out of forty-one state assemblymen, a majority of the city magistrates, a majority of the county commissioners, and the offices of the Recorder of Deeds, Receiver of Taxes, City Treasurer, Sealer of Weights and Measures, Coroner, and Register of Wills."<sup>1</sup>

#### Rural bosses

Bossism, as Professor Merriam's classification brings out, is by no means confined to large urban centers. In Pennsylvania, for example, powerful as are the machines of the two great cities, it is doubtful if they are able to exert so thorough a degree of control as the machines established in a number of part rural, part urban, and even in certain predominantly rural counties. Of course comparatively little is heard of such cases; the rural boss, unlike his colleague of the city, does not have to face constantly the searchlight of a hostile metropolitan press. Indeed, he is frequently shrewd enough to become the owner of all the principal country newspapers in his territory.

#### City bosses

There can be no question, however, that the thoroughness of machine organization, the number of workers employed by it, the possibilities of political intrigue open to it, and the value of the rewards, financial and otherwise, obtainable by it are immensely greater in cities. Urban concentration *per se* can hardly be considered a cause of this high development of bossism, for similar movements of population have gone on at as great a pace in other countries which have remained free from the political machine. Nor can the large foreign element in our cities be held responsible primarily for bossism therein. "No American city has had its affairs more consistently mismanaged, or has been able to develop fewer wholesome municipal traditions, than Philadelphia; yet the foreign-

<sup>1</sup> Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, Oct. 17, 1922.



## MACHINES AND BOSSES

born element in the population of Philadelphia is much weaker than it is in any other cities of the largest class."<sup>1</sup> However, a brief consideration of the various factors stated above as favoring the development of the machine in the United States will show that they have been combined to a maximum degree in great cities.

### THE GREATER URBAN MACHINES

In matters of form there is no essential difference between the party organizations of our large cities which have been subjected to machine domination and party organizations elsewhere which are free from that influence. The former are more detailed and complete, they provide a better basis for control from above and for the discipline of minor committees, and they are much more abundantly supplied with heelers and henchmen. These special features of city organizations are made possible and necessary by the extent and complexity of city government itself, the large number of offices involved, the abundant revenues handled, and the increasing powers of regulation possessed by municipal officials, all of which are subject to corrupt manipulation. Further, in addition to the temporary campaign clubs common the country over, city organizations have developed a large number of permanent auxiliary clubs with quarters or club houses of their own and with social features which appeal more to the bulk of their members than their political activities.

Organiza-  
tions con-  
trolled by  
machines

### TAMMANY HALL

Among metropolitan machines, that of Tammany Hall in the Democratic organization of New York City is world renowned.<sup>2</sup> The territorial basis of this organiza-

Tammany  
Hall

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Munro, *The Government of American Cities*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Originally an outgrowth of the Society of St. Tammany, or Columbian Order, founded May 12, 1789, and named in honor of a legendary Indian chief. This society was divided into thirteen tribes, the Eagle, Otter, Panther, Beaver, and so on, and was officered by "sachems" (chiefs), a

tion is the state assembly district, of which there are now twenty-three in New York County. Tammany also maintains close relations with, if it does not control, the Democratic organizations in two other of the five counties making up New York City, namely the Bronx and Kings (Brooklyn). In each assembly district Democratic voters choose delegates at the primaries to a District General Committee, the basis being one delegate to each twenty-five voters. Since the direct-primary law of 1913, election districts or precincts have become the units of representation for election to the district general committee. This committee is the governing authority of the party within the assembly district. Formerly it chose a single executive member or district leader whose powers were often equivalent to those of a local boss. At the present time most of the districts choose two leaders, one man and one woman, other districts choosing from four to seven, divided as equally as may be between men and women. Among the duties of the district leader is the appointment of a precinct captain for every precinct, of which there are now 985 in New York County. Each precinct captain has a small corps of workers. He is required to familiarize himself personally with the political affiliations and tendencies of all the voters in his precinct and is held responsible for the maintenance or increase of the party vote at each election. He appoints watchers, challengers, and other party helpers, reporting frequently on local conditions to his superior, the district leader.

General  
Committee  
of Tammany

Above the district organization is that of the county. Theoretically this is under the control of a General Committee made up of the combined membership of the district committees, a total now of 11,264 persons. Of course this is far too large for the performance of executive functions. The latter are intrusted to an executive committee (master of ceremonies), a scribe, and a "wiskinskie" (door-keeper). The members dressed in Indian garb on ceremonial occasions and their meeting place was known as the "wigwam." For details on the early history and organization of the Tammany Society, see G. Myers, *History of Tammany Hall*, chap. i.

mittee of forty-six district leaders, one man and one woman from each district, and this committee is "at once the regular Democratic machine and the political organ of Tammany Hall."<sup>1</sup>

The General Committee of Tammany chooses a chairman, treasurer, secretary, and various committees, but in none of these is supreme party power to be found. Kelly and Croker, former bosses of Tammany, held party offices within the gift of the General Committee, but Charles F. Murphy, the present head of the machine, has refrained from accepting such positions. Officially his name appears upon the list simply as that of one of the seven district leaders from his assembly district. The real sources of his power are far more subtle than any which could be conferred by mere party office. They have been summed up in an admirable statement by Prof. P. O. Ray, as follows:

**Tammany's  
unofficial  
chieftain**

He is a natural leader who occupies no official position in the party organization other than that of executive member for the Twelfth Assembly District. He is not an officer of the county committee nor of the executive committee, nor even chairman of a subcommittee of these committees. He is a political Nestor of the organization, and because of his rare political judgment and his shrewd manipulation of men is enabled to hold a firm control of the party machinery. Holding no other office in the organization, and controlling it only through sheer personal influence Mr. Murphy can be deposed only with the greatest difficulty. It would be necessary to elect county committeemen and executive members who would refuse to go to Mr. Murphy for advice and refuse to follow his suggestions or orders. Probably nothing short of a revolution in the party could bring this about.<sup>2</sup>

Thus Tammany with its thousands of precinct captains and their assistants at the bottom and with its hundreds of committee delegates in each district, converges at the

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Munro, *op. cit.*, p. 162. An excellent detailed account of the Tammany machine is also presented by P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics*, pp. 435-447. Cf. also the *Rules and Regulations of the Democratic-Republican Organization of the County of New York* (1918).

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 440.

top into an executive committee of forty-six, all acknowledging the leadership of one man.

#### Auxiliary clubs

In addition to the primarily political duties of the district leader stated above, he must also devote himself largely to social and charitable activities. Tammany is probably more successful than any other city machine in work of the latter character. On the side of sociability there are innumerable "fly-by-night" campaign clubs, some of them designed to give real assistance, others to drive as hard bargains as possible for the combined votes of their membership. "In a Chicago district (in 1920) a candidate offered a barrel of beer to every club numbering not less than three members. Needless to say many of them sprang up, but the candidate stuck to his word and held the 'parties' promised."<sup>1</sup> And as in other cities there are many permanent political clubs, some of which are named after the district leader, others bearing various regional, national, or fanciful Indian titles—*e.g.*, J. F. Ahearn Association, Senator Dunnigan Club, John F. Curry Association, Downtown Tammany Club, Sixteenth Assembly District Tammany Club, Italian Harlem Democratic League, French Democratic Club, Porto-Rican-American Democratic Club, and the Anawanda, Cherokee, Chippewa, Huron, and Minqua clubs. The Republican organization in New York, which in general follows Tammany lines closely, also possesses a long list of affiliated permanent clubs. Each of these clubs has a small hall or suite conveniently located, with rooms for smoking and for cards, billiards, and other games. Moderate dues are paid by members, deficits or special needs being generously met by the district leader. In the social atmosphere of these clubs friendships ripen which may prove valuable assets politically. Young men are particularly welcome, and thus many a political career is launched. Summer outings to Coney Island or up the river, with athletic events and refreshments on a Gargantuan scale, are great

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

events in the club calendars. Generous district leaders also hire steamers to give the women and children a day's excursion during the heated term. In winter they provide a big beefsteak dinner in a Bowery restaurant, followed by the donation of a pair of shoes to each guest.

### PHILADELPHIA REPUBLICAN ORGANIZATION

In its main outlines and purposes the Republican organization of Philadelphia closely resembles the Democratic organization of New York City. "Our organization," said David H. Lane, sage of practical politics and for a generation leader of the Twentieth Ward, "bears the same relation to Philadelphia that Tammany does to New York."<sup>1</sup> On occasion, however, Tammany men have rejected such comparisons. According to Plunkitt, "the difference between a looter and a practical politician is the difference between the Philadelphia Republican gang and Tammany Hall."<sup>2</sup> Be this as it may, one minor point of contrast between the two machines is noteworthy. Tammany, it will be recalled, uses the assembly district as the unit of representation. Under the "Rules of the Republican Party for the City and County of Philadelphia," now in effect, the unit of representation is the precinct, locally known as the district or division. There are from nine to eighty-two of these districts in each ward, the number in the city as a whole being 1,464.

Republican  
organiza-  
tion in  
Philadelphia

At its base in the district the Philadelphia organization is a pure party democracy, since "every qualified Republican elector shall be a member of the division (or district) committee" and this committee "shall be the representative body of the Republican party in the district (or division)." However, the pure democratic feature is tempered by control from above as the district committee acts under the direction of the ward executive committee.<sup>3</sup> On the second

Division  
committees

<sup>1</sup> P. O. Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 448. Cf. also C. R. Woodruff, "Philadelphia's Republican Tammany," *Outlook*, vol. lxix, pp. 169-172 (Sept. 21, 1901).

<sup>2</sup> W. L. Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Rules*, § v.



Tuesday of December of each year the qualified Republican voters of each district meet in caucus and organize as the district committee by the choice of a president, secretary, and treasurer.

#### Ward organization

Above the district organization comes that of the wards, forty-eight in number. In the ward the party authority is the Ward Executive Committee, consisting of two members from each district, chosen for a term of two years in direct-primary elections by the qualified Republican electors of the district. This makes a body ranging from 18 to 164 members, according to the size of the ward. Permanent organization of the Ward Executive Committee is effected by the election of the usual executive officers and committees, followed by the choice of "one person who shall be the member of the Central Campaign Committee" of the city as a whole. The "one person" thus officially designated is more commonly known as the ward leader. Although the term used in the rules is broad enough to include women, the choice of each ward so far has always fallen upon a man. He exercises political powers and influence of great local importance, similar to those of the district leader in New York City. There are also a number of permanent ward clubs in Philadelphia, but they do not play so active a part as those affiliated with Tammany. By an interesting provision of the rules (§ VI, cl. 2), the ward leader is "subject to recall at any time by a vote of two thirds of the duly elected members of the Ward Executive Committee."

#### Central campaign committee

For the city and county as a whole party authority is vested in a Central Campaign Committee of forty-eight members, one from each ward, selected for a term of one year by the separate ward executive committees. In other words, this is simply a grand convocation of the leaders who separately dominate, each in his own ward, and if united could dominate in city and county. One interesting feature of the Philadelphia organization is the fact that nominees for ward, or for city and county offices, are given *ex-officio* membership, without the right to vote for

## MACHINES AND BOSSES

officers, however, upon their ward executive committee or upon the Central Campaign Committee respectively.

To sum up: the Republican party organization of Philadelphia is a perfect hierarchy, ascending from the 331,499 qualified party voters eligible to membership in the 1,464 district committees to the forty-eight ward committees with their collective membership of 2,928, and from the ward committees to the Central Campaign Committee of forty-eight members. Since 1895, however, no single leader has been able to dominate the city and county as a whole. According to a local witticism Philadelphia is the city of "squab and scrapple," but it is also the city of "scrap and squabble," the latter descending at times to the political use of imported gunmen and assassination, as in the famous Fifth Ward case of 1917. During the period since 1895 and particularly of recent years the most powerful machine in the organization was the so-called "contractor combine" maintained by the Vare Brothers. As far as party office was concerned, "Ed" Vare, the "Napoleon of Philadelphia political leaders," occupied the position merely of representative from the Thirty-ninth Ward in the City Central Campaign Committee. While dominant at times to the extent of controlling the mayor's office and once the governorship of the state, the contractor combine has always been obliged to fight strenuously the Penrose machine, formerly under the local leadership of McNichol, and also the independent Republicans of the city.

The "contractor combine"

## CHICAGO PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

In Chicago both parties use the ward as the basis of organization. There are thirty-five wards, each of which elects by party vote in the direct primary a ward committeeman for a term of four years. The ward committeeman names precinct committeemen or leaders, the total number of such offices being about 2,200 in 1921. The City Committee, which is the controlling party authority for the city as a whole, consists of thirty-five representa-

Chicago organizations

tives, one from each ward. In votes taken by the City Committee each of the representatives is given a strength proportionate to that of the vote of his party in the ward at the last preceding gubernatorial election. As in Philadelphia, factional fighting is the order of the day, particularly on the Republican side, where the Thompson and Deneen-Brundage organizations oppose each other, and to a somewhat less extent on the Democratic side, where the Sullivan and Harrison-Dunne organizations are the contestants. A striking peculiarity of Chicago politics consists in the creation by each of these four factions of a group composed of all its members in the City Committee plus one member from each ward where it is in a minority.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF BOSSES

Efforts to  
describe the  
typical boss

Naturally a political figure so striking as that of the boss is subject to endless comment, much of it vituperative. Efforts have also been made to trace more soberly the career and character of the typical boss, distinguishing as species of the genus the city boss and the state boss.<sup>1</sup> So far as the career of bosses is concerned, it may be taken for granted that, like other political leaders, they must serve their apprenticeship, beginning as lieutenants or even as henchmen, before they can expect after innumerable factional conflicts to dominate a district or a city. Study of the characteristics of the better-known figures in this field reveals so many divergences, however, that to talk of a type is apt to prove somewhat misleading. Consider, for example, such names as the following: Platt and Barnes of New York; the two Camerons, Quay, and Penrose of Pennsylvania; General Sewall and "Jim" Smith of New Jersey; General Brayton of Rhode Island; and among city leaders Tweed, "Honest John" Kelly, Croker, and Murphy of Tammany; Fred Lundin, Roger Sullivan, John

<sup>1</sup> M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, vol. ii, pp. 401-412; also in briefer form in his *Democracy and the Party System*, pp. 250-255.

Powers, "Bathhouse John" Coughlin and "Hinky-Dink" Kenna of Chicago; McManes, "Iz" Durham, McNichol, and the Vare brothers of Philadelphia; Flinn and "Chris" Magee of Pittsburgh; "Colonel Ed" Butler of St. Louis; "Doc" Ames of Minneapolis; George B. Cox and "Rud" Hynicka of Cincinnati; "Abe" Ruef and Schmitz of San Francisco; and "Fingy" Connors of Buffalo.

In the foregoing brief list there are five college graduates, two of them honor men of their classes. At the other end of the scale Tweed was "a chairmaker by trade, a vulgar good fellow by nature, a politician by circumstances, a boss by evolution and a grafter by choice."<sup>1</sup> As a young man Boies Penrose, scion of a wealthy and distinguished family of Philadelphia, allied himself with the "highbrows" and reformers. He was joint author of a scholarly treatise on the development of the government of his native city which was published by one of the greater universities of the country.<sup>2</sup> While little of the attitude of the "scholar in politics" was maintained by the mature Penrose, he was nevertheless able to the end of his career to make effective appeal to men of this type as against the Vares. According to one of his *obiter dicta*, he was a "statesman," the Vares were "ash carts." "Ed" Vare, the greatest local opponent of Penrose, was of equally pure American stock, but born to poverty and hard work, his education such only as the local schools could give, his first employment that of hawking vegetables from door to door, and incidentally making many valuable acquaintances in the process. James Smith, Jr., of New Jersey, is a manufacturer on a large scale, president of a trust company, and served one term in the United States Senate. Cox of Cincinnati was in turn a newsboy and bootblack, a

Individual  
differences  
among  
bosses

<sup>1</sup> S. P. Orth, *op cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> E. P. Allison and B. Penrose, "The City Government of Philadelphia," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, 72 pp., Fifth Series, vols. i-ii, 1887. Following an account of the development of municipal government in Philadelphia from 1681 to 1887, the authors present a sympathetic analysis of the Bullitt reform charter of the latter year.

butcher's boy, a wagon driver, a tobacco salesman, a bar-tender, a saloon-keeper, and after his rise to power a large operator in real estate, banking and theatrical enterprises. According to a typical newspaper sketch written at the time of his indictment for perjury he had "the protruding paunch, the protruding jaw, and the inevitable protruding cigar of the boss," but these are mere cartoonists' properties rather than universals of flesh and blood bosses. In spite of his boorish manners and appearance Cox possessed great shrewdness, genuine courage, and a real love for children. In San Francisco "Abe" Ruef was a university graduate and an able lawyer; his closest associate, Schmitz, was a musician and labor leader. In family and cultural background General Brayton, who served with credit in the Civil War, may be compared with Penrose. Like "Ed" Vare, Flinn was a boss contractor. "Doc" Ames was a skillful surgeon. "Colonel Ed" Butler was a horseshoer. Croker, a machinist by trade, fought a number of formal prize fights as a young man and later was tried for shooting and killing a man in an election row.<sup>1</sup> The jury failed to agree. Myers states it as the opinion of those in a position to know that Croker did not fire the fatal shot.

Certain  
common  
traits of  
bosses

Amid such diversity of origin and character it is apparent that a great deal of intensive study must be done before sound generalizations can be reached. Nevertheless, a few tentative conclusions may be risked. Certainly "bosses are not recruited from any class, creed, or race."<sup>2</sup> Still, there is a decided preponderance of Irish names in any list of men who have attained prominence in this field, particularly as heads of city machines, although this would perhaps not be so marked if the less well advertised rural bosses who are usually of straight American stock were included. Like other political leaders, bosses reflect their immediate environment. From the point of view of a high-class residential section the boss of a despised slum ward seems a very vulgar and depraved person. To his

<sup>1</sup> G. Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> C. E. Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 165.



neighbors and constituents, on the other hand, he seems the sum of all they deem successful in life—powerful, rich, generous, and hence altogether worthy the clanlike loyalty they feel for him.<sup>1</sup>

One virtue almost universally ascribed to bosses is that they "keep their word." This need not imply the highest innate respect on their part for truth and honor. Naturally, promises regarding patronage and deals must be kept, otherwise a political career in any environment, even the worst, is soon rendered impossible. Being thus obliged to keep faith, the boss is, as a rule, extremely cautious about pledging himself definitely in advance. Bosses are excellent judges of human nature, especially in discerning the hidden desires of men, which they know how to play upon to their own advantage. They must also understand popular psychology and be able to compose with diplomatic skill the innumerable clashes—racial, class, religious, and economic—of their multifarious following. If diplomacy fails, as often it must, they are resourceful, unscrupulous, and determined in factional warfare. "I shall win," said one of Quay's men, fighting for party control in the Philadelphia Republican machine, "because I am ready to risk the penitentiary to win; the other man isn't." He won.<sup>2</sup> Defeat, when it comes, a boss takes as the end of a round, not of a battle. In spite of temporary setbacks, he has an invulnerable confidence in the system he represents. Finally the boss of any considerable area must be a past master of organization on a large scale and must devote unlimited time and thought to the repair and lubrication of his machine. Of all recent state bosses Penrose was the only one equipped by training and inclination for real statesmanship, yet he "was swamped in the machinery he won the privilege of directing and ruling." . . . "There are about five thousand election divisions in this state," he

Qualities of  
bosses

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, chap. vii.

<sup>2</sup> From T. Williams, "After Penrose, What?" *Century*, vol. cv, pp. 49-55 (Nov., 1922). This is one of the most frank and incisive, and at the same time sympathetic, studies that has been made of an American boss.

said. "They hold from twenty thousand to twenty-five thousand Republican workers who carry the division and bring out the vote. I must know all these men. They must know me. . . . I must know what they are, what they want, and how and when. My hand must always be on the job. I can never take it off. All my time goes to the task, and must. If I take my hand off, I am gone. . . . As for great measures and great issues such as you talk about, no Senator of a state of this size, run as it is, has the time to take them up."<sup>1</sup>

Bosses deficient in statesmanship and partisanship

Engrossed in activities of the above character, few bosses have shown any real conception of the broader issues of statesmanship. Thus during the famous free-silver campaign of 1896, Croker naïvely expressed his contempt for the sixteen-to-one controversy and suggested that the coinage ratio be adjusted from day to day in accordance with the changing market ratio of gold and silver! Precisely in the same way that most bosses are deficient in knowledge of statecraft, they are—remarkable as it may seem—deficient also in party spirit. To them there is "no politics in politics"—it is all a matter of business, of one deal after another. City machines have repeatedly sacrificed the national or state candidates of their party by trading votes to the advantage of their own local slate.<sup>2</sup> Thus following the national election of 1884, Tammany was generally charged with treachery to Grover Cleveland owing to his openly expressed independence of the boss and his machine. During the campaign "Honest

<sup>1</sup> T. Williams, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> "Party efficiency," according to no less an authority than Boies Penrose, "increases in the exact ratio in which it disentangles itself from municipal affairs. Party principles are not even a secondary consideration with the Democratic Tammany machine in New York or the Republican contractors' machine in Philadelphia. Each of them exists to promote selfish interests and each of them is a liability to the party with which it is aligned." Cf. W. Hard, "The Last of the Good Bandits," *Hearst's International*, vol. xli, p. 14 (April, 1922). True, Penrose was at war with the Vares when he said this, but that does not detract in the least from the validity of his statement, which, by the way, he might have extended to certain state machines, his own included.

John" Kelly, who then ruled Tammany, predicted the defeat of the Democratic candidate for the Presidency and was deeply chagrined at his victory. Four years later Hill, the Democratic candidate for governor, carried the state, while Cleveland lost it, and consequently the election, by the narrow margin of 13,000. Again charges were freely made that Democrats had traded votes for Harrison with Republicans who voted for Hill.<sup>1</sup> As a rule state machines are somewhat more cautious in matters of party regularity than local machines. An overwhelming amount of evidence might be produced, however, to show that the boss of one party is usually willing to make a deal with the boss of the opposing party. The thing need not be wondered at: regardless of the party label, be it Democratic or Republican, the ends of machine politicians are the same.

When deals of this sort become a matter of course the result is a bipartisan machine. To cite the most famous illustration, in 1914 Roosevelt charged that Barnes, the Republican leader of the state of New York, was in a bipartisan alliance with the Democratic state organization in the interest of crooked politics and crooked business. Barnes responded by bringing suit for libel, the trial of which lasted from April 19 to May 22, 1915, and proved one of the most sensational in American political history. In his own defense Roosevelt not only refuted in a masterly manner the charges made against himself, but also presented such damaging evidence supporting his original accusation that the jury found in his favor.<sup>2</sup>

Bipartisan  
machines

Deplorable as are the results of a bipartisan machine

<sup>1</sup> It is only fair to state that Tammany supported Cleveland in 1888 at the Democratic national convention and that the city of New York gave him a plurality of 55,831 in the election of that year. In 1906 Cleveland himself said that he had "no idea or impression that the presidential ticket was the victim of treachery in New York in the election of 1888." Cf. J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States from Hayes to McKinley*, p. 326; and on Tammany's conduct during the elections of 1884 and 1888, G. Myers, *History of Tammany Hall*, pp. 262, 265, and 270.

<sup>2</sup> The best brief account of this trial is presented by J. B. Bishop, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Time*, vol. ii, pp. 365-369. Cf. also W. D. Lewis, *The Life of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 419.

Effect of  
bipartisan-  
ship on  
minority  
party

in a state like New York, where the two parties are of substantially equal strength, they are even worse in states where one party is greatly in the majority. In such cases the bosses of the dominant machine make every effort to gain control of their weaker rival. They are greatly aided in this by bipartisan elective offices which by law must be divided between the two principal parties. Thus in the case of a commission of three members, not more than two of whom may be of one political party, it is often an easy task for the boss of the dominant party not only to pick the two incumbents of his own party, but also to throw enough of his voting strength to the allied boss of the minority party to secure the election of a pliable tool by the latter. It is beyond question that manipulation of this sort has done much to sap the strength and ruin the integrity of minority parties in a number of states. Deals parceling out offices have been notoriously frequent as between Republican machine leaders and bipartisan Democratic politicians in many parts of Pennsylvania, for example, with the result that the latter party has lost greatly in strength and standing. It has taken the most determined and long-continued fighting on the part of the so-called reorganized faction of the Democratic party to make headway against the practice.

Individual  
traits of  
bosses

Apart from the few general traits and practices of bosses sketched above, the widest possible individual differences exist. Like Tweed, some of them delight in a naïve show of power, virtually holding court in the presence of their feudatories and sycophants. Others unobtrusively deny all exceptional influence, ascribing responsibility and credit to office holders or to the organization. "Ed" Vare made it a point to admit to a personal interview all who wished to see him; McNichol regarded this as a foolish waste of time and was dexterous at evasion. "Chris" Magee was a "good mixer"; Cox was short-spoken and gruff. It is true that some politicians of this type "do not indulge in cant,"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. J. Ford, "Municipal Corruption," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xix, pp. 673-686 (Dec., 1904).

## MACHINES AND BOSSES

but others approach it closely in their assertions that they have the cause of the poor and oppressed, or of the party, nearest their hearts.

Among their own following, of course, bosses enjoy popularity of a sort, but as a general rule they have been conspicuously unsuccessful as candidates for popular elective office. On such occasions the dislike of the great mass for the masters of the machine is apt to prove overwhelming. Doubtless it is for this reason that the latter so seldom appear as candidates for offices within the gift of the people. In the old days before the Seventeenth Amendment state bosses aspired to and frequently attained at the hands of the legislature they controlled the post of United States Senator. Last of the great state bosses, Penrose survived the change, being elected twice by the people after having been elected three times by the legislature. "Give me the people every time," he said in a braggart mood to a reform friend. "Look at me! No legislature would ever have dared to elect me to the Senate, not even at Harrisburg; but the people, the dear people, elected me by a bigger majority than my opponent's total vote—by over half a million—and you and your reform friends thought direct election by the people would turn men like me out of the Senate. Give me the people every time."<sup>1</sup>

Unpopular-  
ity of  
bosses

In exceptional cases the powers of a boss have been passed at his death or resignation with as little disturbance as might be expected under a well-established monarchy at the death or abdication of a king. Pennsylvanians speak habitually of the "Cameron-Quay-Penrose dynasty," composed of Simon Cameron, 1867-77; his son, Don Cameron, 1877-87; Quay, 1887-1904; and Penrose, 1904-22.<sup>2</sup> Since the death of the latter no leader strong enough to master the machine has arisen. A brief interregnum followed the collapse of and dispersion of the Tweed Ring,

Transmis-  
sion of  
powers of  
the boss

<sup>1</sup> T. Williams, *ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> A. K. McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, vol. i, p. 464; vol. ii, p. 482.



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but subsequently the comparative smoothness with which power was transferred from Kelly (1874-86) to Croker (1886-1902) and from the latter to Murphy would seem to justify the use of the same monarchic term in connection with the leadership of Tammany. Even if they do not succeed in naming a successor, it is not at all uncommon for bosses to retain their power, of course with the ups and downs incident to the calling, until the time of their death or voluntary retirement. Others less fortunate or less cautious, perhaps, have been utterly deprived of power, even driven into exile, as was "Doc" Ames, or sent to prison, as were Tweed and "Abe" Ruef. An intensive study of the causes of the defeat and downfall of bosses should furnish many results of practical value.

### BOSSISM AS A MONEY-MAKING PURSUIT

Economic  
motive pre-  
dominant  
with bosses

Consideration of the careers of American bosses shows that almost without exception they sought persistently to make money through the exercise of their political influence.<sup>1</sup> "I am working for my pocket all the time," Croker coolly informed the Mazet Committee, and McNichol had the effrontery to announce at a public meeting in Philadelphia: "I am here for the same reason as the rest of you boys; we are all of us out for the coin." No doubt bosses are impelled also by the love of power for its own sake, but they must have money in large amounts to support their power. Since the economic motive proves thus to be a dominant factor, some statement of the sources of income open to bosses and also of the expenses they must meet, is essential to the case.

<sup>1</sup> To be a political boss in the usually accepted meaning of the term implies the ability to make money out of political manipulation. For this reason Addicks, who tried to buy up a following in Delaware in order to secure his election to the United States Senate, is scarcely to be classed as a boss. He made his money as speculator, promoter, and organizer of gas companies before his descent upon Delaware. A "political highwayman," himself he seems to have been relentlessly robbed by local politicians and his career ended in bankruptcy and political failure. Cf. G. Kennan, "Holding Up a State, The True Story of Addicks and Delaware," *Outlook*, vol. lxxiii, pp. 277-283, 386-392, 429-436 (Feb. 7, 14, 21, 1903).

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Of course the number and amount of the items on both sides of the ledger vary with the degree to which the boss has established his control and also with the wealth of the territory in which he operates. It should not be assumed that the total yield from the various sources detailed below is garnered into the treasure chest of the boss without deductions *en route*. Even before a machine has been set up various diffuse forms of corrupt dealing are apt to flourish. Under a high degree of bossism it may happen that certain cliques of politicians continue to practice petty graft on their own account. On the other hand, it is thoroughly characteristic of machine rule to centralize in as few hands as possible the revenues from all forms of political manipulation.

Centraliza-  
tion of  
receipts  
under  
bossism

In the first place, every machine and boss may be depended upon to take full charge of all campaign funds. They are under no illusions whatever about the power of the purse in politics, and upon occasion are sufficiently outspoken on this subject. Much of the money thus secured must be passed down to district leaders and precinct captains, particularly if the result of the election is dubious. Indeed, if the situation becomes desperate and funds are not forthcoming freely enough, the boss may be obliged to dig deep into his own pocket and even to borrow large sums of money to save the day. On occasions when the opposition is weak, however, bosses have been accused times without number of feathering their own nests out of funds contributed to bring about a party victory. Since 1890 misappropriations of this sort have been made more difficult by corrupt practices acts but it would be going entirely too far to say that they had been rendered impossible by the legislation now on the statute books.

Campaign  
funds

Every boss of any importance must work unceasingly to secure as large a number as possible of thoroughly loyal, efficient, and not too scrupulous organization workers. If these workers had to be paid in hard cash out of his own resources or out of party funds political and financial bankruptcy of the machine would promptly fol-

Working  
force of the  
boss

low. In fact, they are paid by securing jobs for them in public offices or elsewhere. Hence the relentless opposition of the machine to every extension of civil-service reform; hence the unremitting perseverance of the boss in running down every scrap of patronage, however small, for his henchmen. Of course this does not bring in money directly to the boss, indeed at times it may cost him something and it certainly keeps him extremely busy at all times. But unless he succeeds in placing large numbers of his followers he soon loses control of the machine, and in consequence the possibility of making large sums of money through that control. What he secures in effect, therefore, are services which may be more valuable than money itself. These services, be it noted, are obtained at the cost of the government and ultimately of the taxpayer.

Discipline of  
workers

Like other men, the henchmen of the boss for whom he has procured public jobs cannot serve two masters successfully. If any question of loyalty or division of their time comes up, they may be depended upon to hold to the boss, since usually he could have them dismissed as readily as he had them appointed. In Philadelphia, for example, "each ward leader with few exceptions . . . was given an appointive position, so that at any time at which he might prove recalcitrant he can be brought to terms by threatening removal. Councilmen were controlled by receiving clerkships in the administrative departments or by having their near relatives, sons, daughters, or others dependent upon them for livelihood, given appointive places. In this way or through subsidies to interests in which the ward leaders or councilmen were interested, the machine could depend at any moment upon the unquestioning fealty of its retainers. It did not have to discuss ways and means with them or secure their views. It knew that by the very simple process of threatening to cut off their bread and butter it could bring them to support the most iniquitous or arbitrary measures."<sup>1</sup> With such powers of coercion in

<sup>1</sup> C. R. Woodruff, "Philadelphia's Revolution," *Yale Review*, vol. xv, pp. 8-23 (May, 1906).

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the hands of a machine it is not to be wondered at that on primary and election days the offices at many city halls are well-nigh deserted, most of the employees being busily engaged on political work in their respective wards. Public employees who are especially gifted as party workers, so that the boss needs them all the time, may be carried on padded pay rolls, although by far the more common practice is to allow them to divide their time between their offices and their wards. Thus the government secures only fifty, or it may be only twenty-five, per cent efficiency on its salary expenditures, while the boss obtains such service as he may require almost wholly at the expense of the public treasury.

In this field, also, reform in the guise of the merit system has limited to some extent the opportunities of the machine. Consequently, bosses now turn with considerable success to street-railway, gas, electric companies and other public service corporations for which they have done favors and from which they may ask in return jobs for their henchmen. Public contractors and firms which sell supplies to the city or state are besieged in the same way. From the point of view of the boss, however, this "unofficial patronage," as Professor Munro calls it,<sup>1</sup> is not so satisfactory as the official patronage provided by public offices. Corporations submit to the demands made upon them for jobs with ill grace and only when they fear possible reprisals from the boss. As a rule they prefer to pay cash for political favors, thus reserving to themselves freedom of choice and control in their personnel departments. When an appointment is procured for a heeler in a public office the boss usually controls the official superior of the heeler. If so, it makes comparatively little difference, except to the public service, however inefficient the heeler may be. But private corporations are more exacting. If one of their employees, put in at the request of the boss, does not perform his duties properly, he is likely soon to

"Unofficial  
patronage"

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Munro, *The Government of American Cities*, p. 173.

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be on the hands of the boss again as an applicant for another job.

"Political  
assess-  
ments"

In one way the boss is able to obtain money as well as political service from those whom he has had appointed to public jobs. He may establish a system of political assessments, thus collecting a certain regular percentage, or "shake-down" as it is called, from the salaries of job-holders. Ostensibly these assessments are made to be used as campaign funds, but as in the case of the latter, charges are not wanting that they have been converted at times to the private uses of the boss.

### MACHINE CONTROL OF THE LEGISLATURE

Control of  
legislative  
appropria-  
tions

Whether or not the control of the machine extends to legislative bodies, appropriations are constantly being made with an eye to the political support which may thereby be secured. In this connection the congressional "pork barrel" is perhaps the best known,<sup>1</sup> the beneficiaries being individual Congressmen and the districts they represent. State legislatures and city councils also have their pork barrels, but if machine control has been set up in these bodies the distribution of appropriations will be centralized in the hands of the bosses. In its more innocent form this need involve nothing worse than extravagance. As a matter of fact it closely resembles in its motivation the search for public offices. Give a man an office and you may count upon his political services. Give a congressional district or a ward a public building and it should be worth a certain number of workers and votes in your next campaign. When "pork" is distributed by a machine it naturally looks after the districts in which it is strong or in which it hopes to gain support. Unnecessary improvements may be made in such districts or improvements may be located where the need for them is slight. In both cases local landlords, purveyors, and laborers reap profits and employment, and, unless "ingrates," are usually not unwilling to return thanks and service to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. J. Ford, *Cost of Our National Government* (1909).



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machine as the author of these good things. In Philadelphia, for example, the Vares were acutely conscious of the value of public improvements for the wards they dominated. "Give the people something they can see," was one of their slogans, and South Philadelphia could always count upon their most strenuous efforts in the matter of street lights, public squares, parks, boulevards, and public buildings. It is needless to say that similar interest is not manifested by machines in public services which may be highly useful, but which cannot be "seen" and which, therefore, do not bring in votes—for example, sanitary inspection, accounting and budget reform, civil-service reform, the employment of experts, and the like. Indeed, the latter are anathema to bosses, since they make machine rule difficult by suggesting honest and efficient methods, or unpopular by exposures of negligence, extravagance, and graft. A Tammany mayor of New York elected following an era of reform gave characteristic utterance to this feeling in the remark that as soon as he took office all the trains leaving the city would be filled with municipal experts seeking jobs elsewhere.

### Contracts

In the form described above "pork barrel" appropriations result merely in extravagance. The situation becomes tainted with corruption as well as extravagance when the machine itself participates in contracts. This may be done by throwing contracts to favored firms, exacting secret rebates from the latter. Specifications may be so drawn that only those firms which are willing to divide profits are able to bid. If contracts fall into the hands of companies which prove intractable they may be so harassed by refusal of permits and rejections of work that they will come to terms. In a few cases such as that of the contractor combine of Philadelphia the bosses themselves go openly into the contracting business on a large scale.<sup>1</sup> This is certain to provoke bitter opposition, but

<sup>1</sup> The Philadelphia *Public Ledger* of October 17, 1922, estimated the value of public contracts awarded to Senator Vare up to 1921 at about \$20,000,000. The McNichol machine was also credited with getting its full share

it has the advantage of providing safe jobs for an army of political workers and of yielding large profits, especially when the inspection of work is intrusted to city officials who are themselves under the control of the machine. Of course the prospect is not so roseate when the boss loses his grip on the government, but even then contracts may be secured from corporations or individuals needing future political favors or, if worse comes to the worst, from others on a purely competitive basis. It is at such times of adversity that the boss is hardest driven to take care of dependents who have been thrown out of public jobs by an unfeeling reform administration. A large contracting business will, of course, provide places for many of these "martyrs," albeit at some risk to efficiency.

### Special privileges

Control of legislative bodies by the machine is valuable in other ways besides giving access to the pork barrel. To legislatures all manner of interests must appeal for special privileges. Some of the latter are quite legitimate, no doubt, but if the machine is in control it may demand a heavy price before they are granted. Others are doubtful or even sinister in character, and in such cases the price exacted is still heavier. In Congress the principal interests seeking special favors have been land-grant companies, railroads, protected manufacturers, whisky, timber, sugar, coal, and oil barons. Bad as have been the resultant scandals, it is nevertheless true that the federal government has maintained higher standards than state and local governments. State legislatures and municipal councils have no such imperial domain to exploit, but they offer glittering opportunities to the corruptionist from time to time. Franchise grants to public-service corporations are the most important items in their gift. In large cities a street-railway or gas franchise may be worth many millions of dollars to its promoters, and the corruption fund of contracts. In 1911 the public outcry against the mixture of contracts and politics in Philadelphia became so threatening that the head of the contractor combine made a "positive and unchangeable" statement that he would sell out his contracting business. But the storm blew over and he did nothing of the sort.

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to get it passed will be large in proportion. When old franchises are about to terminate the fight to extend them involves enormously large financial interests. Laws or ordinances permitting increases of fares or rates are also rich in possibilities of corrupt plunder. The most malodorous scandals in American municipal politics have occurred in connection with franchise ordinances. Among other forms of state and municipal legislation which directly touch powerful financial interests and may therefore be depended upon to invite corrupt manipulation are tax laws, building codes, laws affecting insurance companies, railroads, or other corporations, factory and labor laws, including child-labor laws.

If machine control is not in existence the hunt for legislative favors is a diffuse affair conducted from the outside by the interests seeking them through swarms of special counsel, legislative agents and lobbyists, pure and simple. On the inside of the legislative body many individuals or small groups of members participate in the corrupt process. Results are too uncertain under this system, or rather lack of system, and exposures far too numerous. Neither the famous law of supply and demand nor the higgling of the political market seems to result in fixed prices for crooked votes. Honorable members who feel that they have not received their just share of the bribe money protest too loudly. Here as elsewhere better results may be secured by system and centralization. In Illinois the inquiry into the Lorimer scandal showed that a legislative "jack pot" had existed for a number of years in the state legislature.<sup>1</sup> This was a common fund collected from all the many interests ranging from corporations, manufacturers, and banks to loan sharks and patent-medicine firms, which were involved in securing or defeating legislation. An estimate made at the time indicated that the jack pot contained items ranging from a few thousand dollars to one of \$250,000 contributed to influence the senatorial

Legislative  
"jack pots"

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent brief account of this famous jack pot, see C. E. Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

contest. At the end of the session the total amount in the jack pot was divided among the members who were "reasonable" and who "went along" with the "crowd"—that is, who voted as they were told. Most of them did not know who paid the money or for what particular bills, so that they were in no position to "squeal" effectually even if they had been so inclined.

Absolute  
control of  
legislative  
favours

An even better adaptation of the famous principle of "addition, division, and silence" is secured when the boss is in absolute control of the legislature. During the domination of one of the state bosses of New York it was perfectly well understood by all interested in legislation that the necessary condition of its passage was to see the boss. It must not be inferred that he took too narrow or grasping a view of the case. If a bill submitted to him was in the public interest and carried with it no financial gain to anybody, as, *e.g.*, a bill reorganizing the private charitable agencies of a city, he marked it "O. K." and sent it on its way to certain passage in the legislature. For bills not in the public interest or which enabled private concerns to make a profit a definite price was fixed and collected before their enactment. The certainty, secrecy, and centralization of this method, particularly the elimination of numerous lobbyists and others who might learn too much, mark it as immensely superior, from the machine point of view, to the crude methods formerly employed and even to the jack pot.

"Strike"  
bills

Machine members soon discovered that for their purposes the legislature could be used as a double-barreled shotgun. On the one hand, business interests, as we have just noted, were considered fair game whenever they asked for special favors; on the other hand, they could be relentlessly and constantly hunted afterward under the guise of regulation. The public interest demanded laws providing for just taxation, for the fixing of rates, fares, and quality of service, and for safety and sanitation. Beyond doubt the demand for such legislation was greatly increased by the popular conviction that corporate interests had

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received through collusion with the machine special privileges to which they were not entitled. Being partly in the nature of reprisals, some of the proposed regulatory measures may have been too drastic. This rendered them more threatening to the business interests concerned, a fact which materially increased their utility to corruptionists in the legislature. Even measures of a thoroughly justifiable character sometimes involved the placing of heavy and unwonted burdens upon business concerns. However mistakenly, the latter often preferred to pay large sums to have these measures killed in the legislature rather than to adapt themselves to higher standards of public morality. When there was no popular demand for regulation it was, of course, an easy matter for corrupt groups in the legislature or municipal council to concoct measures of this type, some of them outrageously unfair or even confiscatory in character. In the semi-criminal argot of the times these bills were dubbed "strikes," "bell-ringers," "fetchers," "old friends," "sand-baggers," and the like.

### MACHINE CONTROL OF ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES

Profitable as is machine control of legislative bodies, it cannot be compared with the possibilities of machine control of administrative agencies. In the case of the former, years may intervene between lucrative senatorial fights or franchise grabs. But a boss in command of certain departments of state or local administration can interfere with important business interests every day in the year and every hour in the day. The process is materially aided by certain long-standing political traditions. One of these is the length and detailed character of our legislation, another our opposition to strong administration. As to the former it is often possible to find amid the mass of loosely drafted statutory detail some single provision—perhaps inserted for this express purpose—which, interpreted and enforced rigidly, would annoy intensely certain business interests. Rather than comply, some pay the price

Machine  
control of  
administra-  
tive  
agencies



of immunity demanded by the machine; others, who will not provide "hush money," are harassed in countless ways. Often statutes and ordinances are inspired by high ideals which take little account of actual conditions. Thus at the time of the Iroquois Theater fire with its appalling death roll the Chicago ordinance made to prevent just such eventualities was of the most elaborate character, so elaborate, indeed, that it had been neglected by managers and unenforced by inspectors. "Legislative four-flushing," as Mayor Harrison aptly called this practice, is the mother of the "administrative lie." Provisions in the law which impose ideal but impossible requirements simply play into the hands of the machine.

Aided by  
weak ad-  
ministration

At this point our predilection for weak administration comes to the aid of the boss. Nobody loves an inspector and few favor increased appropriations to enable him to do his work thoroughly. When machine control is established industrious and efficient inspectors are compelled to take orders or else are driven out of the service. The machine can always plead that its failure to enforce laws and ordinances—even when a bribe has been taken to secure that result—is really due to the fact that the force of inspectors at hand is too small. Rigid enforcement against those who do not pay for "protection" is pointed to with pride as evidence of a stern determination to uphold the majesty of the law in spite of the hampering effect of a small and overworked force of inspectors.

Contracts

Through its administrative agencies—federal, state, and local—government touches business at innumerable points, nearly all of which offer opportunities for corrupt manipulation. The possibilities involved in contracts for public work under machine rule have already been touched upon. Contracts for supplies must be watched at all times as to specifications, prices, quality, and deliveries. Neither the peril of the country nor the well-being of the army prevents such sickening scandals as the embalmed-beef episode of 1898-99. On the contrary, the vast expenditures made

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necessary by war simply open up new fields to the profiteer who is never so active as when aided by political influence.

The administration of tax laws of various kinds offers another wide field for evasion, fraud, and bribery. In the collection of customs duties on sugar, for example, it was discovered in 1907 that company checkers were able, by pressing concealed springs connected with the scales, to reduce the weight of every load of sugar landed at the docks. During the six years that this practice had been going on it was estimated that one of the greatest American sugar-refining corporations had escaped paying duties on seventy-five million pounds of sugar. Those immediately responsible for the fraud were convicted, and the company paid two million dollars to the government in settlement of its claim for past duties. The administration of federal excise taxes must also cope with constant attempts at fraud and evasion, most extensive of which, perhaps, was the Whisky Ring scandal of 1875, as a result of which 250 persons were indicted, including President Grant's private secretary. More recently the enforcement of the Volstead Act has been met by every form of bribery and fraud in which large classes of well-to-do and intelligent citizens, otherwise thoroughly law abiding, have been involved.

Tax admin-  
istration

Administration of public-land acts has also been tinged with fraud and forgery, the land and timber thieves frequently being men of the highest position in their own communities. It was in connection with a case of this sort that a United States Senator, John H. Mitchell of Oregon, was convicted and sentenced in 1905 to six months penal servitude and a fine of \$1,000. Two years earlier the Bristow report unearthed a conspiracy to defraud the government out of several millions of dollars, the conspirators' share amounting to between \$300,000 and \$400,000. Federal regulation of railways and corporations also touches interests of enormous financial power and thus offers a maximum temptation for the use of corrupt influence wherever possible.

Public land  
frauds

State regu-  
lation of  
business;  
tax admin-  
istration

State governments have also attempted railroad and corporate regulation within their own sphere of power. In the administration of labor laws and factory acts the state government again touches interests of great financial strength, interests, moreover, which have always been relied upon to supply large campaign contributions. In the Pennsylvania state Republican organization one of the most potent figures for years past has been an equally potent figure in the state manufacturers' association. Wielded by a machine, the administration of state and local tax laws becomes an incomparably efficient means both of reward and punishment. Persons who give aid and comfort to the bosses—"voting right," doing electioneering work, holding party offices, making campaign contributions or the like—may have their property assessed at a small percentage of its value. Persons who perform no party service, have no influence, and are otherwise neutral politically may get off with an assessment fair enough according to the prevailing local standard. But independents, political opponents, and trouble makers for the boss generally are assessed at figures which, if not in excess of real values, are at least grossly overvalued as compared with the average of local practice. More than anything else it is the fear of punishment through unfair tax assessment that keeps large numbers of men of substance quiet under machine rule.

Prisons,  
hospitals,  
asylums

If one could expect the hand of the political spoiler to be stayed anywhere it would be in relation to those unfortunates confined in prisons and asylums or temporarily under state care in hospitals. Yet the very helplessness of inmates in such institutions makes them a favorite target for political abuses. Until recent changes in state administrative practices contracts for supplies needed by penal and charitable establishments were juggled in exactly the same way as contracts entered into by other administrative agencies, with the result that they were furnished shoddy clothing, thin blankets, and tainted food, all in short weights and measures. Prison labor at fifty cents a day

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or less was fought for and exploited by favorites of the machine. "Frightful tales of cruelty and neglect have in the past come out of the prison camps maintained by the lessees; shocking conditions discovered in them; and it is universally agreed that government inspectors were unable to enforce the rather lax standards laid down in the contract."<sup>1</sup> Fortunately this inhuman system has now been given up in large part, only three states still maintaining it. Occasional scandals connected with the traffic in pardons or the sale of "dope" to convicts, both under political influence, are, however, reported from time to time.

In cities under machine rule various administrative agencies may be made instruments of extortion or punishment, notably the tax department, the department of building inspection, health and medical inspection, and the police department. A mass of minor ordinances, all desirable enough in themselves, enable the machine to reach far and wide. Constant annoyance of one pushcart man, while his competitor does as he pleases without interference; cluttering up of the fire escapes of one tenement, while the house next door must keep its fire escapes absolutely clear; permission to one merchant to use sidewalk space for the display of goods, while others are fined for obstructing the public way—these and many other small but important incidents of urban life are to be explained on the ground of political influence or the lack of it.

Most sinister of all are the possibilities involved in the control of the police department. It may be used to collect a large and constant tribute from "protected" gamblers, bootleggers, prostitutes, criminals, dealers in habit-forming drugs, quacks, abortionists, unlicensed midwives, baby farmers, and all the other denizens, large and small, of the underworld of vice and crime. In 1901, a "Gambling Commission" was exposed in New York, "composed of a commissioner who is at the head of one of the city departments, two state senators, and the dictator of the pool-

Machine  
control of  
city admin-  
istration

Machine  
and the  
police  
department

<sup>1</sup> L. N. Robinson, *Penology in the United States*, p. 157.

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room syndicate of the city.”<sup>1</sup> It established a regular tariff for various forms of gambling as follows: Pool rooms, \$300 per month; crap games and gambling houses (small), \$150 per month; gambling houses (large), \$1,000 per month; envelope games, \$50 per month. The exposure of the “Commission” was due to the fact that in its itch for larger revenues it licensed too many establishments. To put the result in the words of one member of the sporting fraternity, “there were not enough suckers to go round,” and some of the overtaxed gamblers themselves “squealed on the system.”

Tribute  
from vice

According to the report of the Chicago Vice Commission of 1911, the total profits realized from the social evil in that city amounted to between \$15,000,000 and \$16,000,000 a year.<sup>2</sup> Of this it was estimated that \$3,000,000 went for “protection.” Tribute is levied not only upon prostitutes themselves, but also upon the owners of houses, apartments, saloons, restaurants, and hotels harboring them, and upon purveyors who supply them at exorbitant prices with liquors, tobacco, food, clothing, jewelry, furniture, and even medical advice.

Machine  
alliance  
with crime

All the agencies of crime—not only actual criminals, but receivers of stolen goods, dealers in the tools of crime, owners of criminal “hang-outs,” professional bondsmen, and crooked criminal lawyers—may be assessed systematically by machine politicians. At times criminals themselves have banded together into a system which negotiates with the powers that be, thus making “their business about as safe from government interference as any other form of business.”<sup>3</sup> Political control of vice and crime has one

<sup>1</sup> See *Corruption in American Politics and Life*, p. 106, by the author.

<sup>2</sup> *The Social Evil in Chicago*, p. 113. See also report of *New York Committee of 15* (1902); G. J. Kneeland, *Commercialized Prostitution in New York* (1913). *The Report of the Vice Commission of Philadelphia*, 1913, p. 15, estimates the annual expenditure in that city for prostitution at \$6,250,000. For comment on the attitude of some political leaders, magistrates, and police officers to the social evil, see p. 10 *et seq.*, of the latter report.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Chicago Council Committee on Crime* (1915), quoted by C. E. Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 153.



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advantage as compared with political control in the field of legitimate business. The latter can be depended upon to produce abundant revenues, but it furnishes few political workers. From the underworld the machine can procure not only money, but votes, heelers of the most dependable sort, even delegates to conventions. Burglars, bootleggers and hold-up men whose absence from the penitentiary is due solely to political influence can be relied upon, at a nod from their official protector, to execute the most daring election crimes. On the other hand, an alliance of the machine with the criminal and vice elements lacks the heavy respectability of an alliance between the machine and big business. Exposure of alliances of the former character provokes violent outbreaks of public indignation beneath which some of the most powerful city bosses of the country have gone down to defeat.

At the other extreme of the scale from the corrupt handling of the police under machine rule comes the employment of public funds in the form of cash on hand by administrative officials. In the aggregate these funds are extremely large. At the beginning of the year 1913 they amounted to nearly two and a half billion dollars held by the governments of the nation, states, counties, and incorporated places over 2,500. During the war this total was greatly increased. At the beginning of 1922 the cash in general administrative funds for the city of New York was \$39,699,524; Chicago, \$48,708,546; Philadelphia, \$12,318,591. On the same date the total of such funds for the 252 cities with a population of 30,000 and over amounted to nearly three hundred millions of dollars.<sup>1</sup> For the forty-eight states it was \$171,581,121.<sup>2</sup>

Incredible as it may seem, the whole interest on these funds in many cities, counties, and states is retained by the treasurers in whose hands they are placed.<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere

Public  
funds

Manipulation  
of  
public  
funds

<sup>1</sup> *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population of over 30,000, 1921*, Table 14, Bureau of the Census.

<sup>2</sup> *Financial Statistics of States, 1921*, Table 11, Bureau of the Census.

<sup>3</sup> C. E. Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

the latter are required by law to secure a minimum rate of interest, say from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 per cent, from the banks selected as depositaries. This enables treasury officials to pocket the difference between the legal rate and the rate actually paid by the banks. Even when the public authority has taken legislative measures to secure for itself the full amount of interest consistent with safety, the power to select the fiduciary institutions which are to receive large deposits of public money is one which can be manipulated to advantage. "I don't mind losing a governorship or a legislature now and then," Quay is reported to have said, "but I always need the state treasuryship." Incidentally the manipulation of state funds brings machine politicians into close relations with some of the most eminent figures in the world of finance. In the notorious Pittsburgh exposure of 1909, it was proved that six banks paid \$102,500 for the privilege of controlling deposits of public funds. Indictments were issued against ninety-eight aldermen, confessions being obtained from fifty-three of them.<sup>1</sup> Another device is to let banks have the funds upon condition that they will allow the politicians responsible for the favor to draw upon them for large loans to be employed in private business ventures or speculations. Or, finally, the politicians may organize banks of their own, deposit in them the lion's share of the public money, and then advance to themselves as individuals large credits based on the state's deposits. Thus through his machine connections the notorious "Bull" Andrews of Pennsylvania was able to secure the deposit of \$1,030,000 of the state's funds in a small country town bank with a capital of only \$50,000. The money was used to finance some highly speculative railway construction schemes in New Mexico. It was "political banking" of this sort culminating in the suicide of two or three Pennsylvania bank cashiers which led to the indictment of Quay for misappropriation of state funds in 1898. Although acquitted, his prestige suffered

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Nock, "What a Few Men Did in Pittsburgh," *American Magazine*, vol. lxx, pp. 808-818 (Oct., 1910).

## MACHINES AND BOSSES

greatly. Nevertheless loose financial practice continued, with the result that in 1905 a Democrat was elected treasurer and the situation at Harrisburg was cleaned up at least for the time being.<sup>1</sup>

### MACHINE AND THE JUDICIARY

In addition to its control over the legislature and the administrative agencies, a well-established machine must also seek to gain a measure of control over the judiciary. As a rule, however, such control is not so complete nor is it so openly exercised as in the former two cases. With the great mass of ordinary civil litigation the boss has no motive to interfere. Indeed, considering the likelihood of a popular revolt, it would be extremely hazardous for him to interfere with the orderly processes of justice in such matters. There are, however, a number of matters connected with the courts in which the boss is perforce deeply interested. Among these are the nomination and election of judges, the patronage under their control, the handling of cases in police and magistrates' courts, decisions affecting the financial interests with which he is allied, and decisions in political cases, *e.g.*, cases involving primary and election laws, prosecutions for graft, and the like.

Control of  
judiciary  
not so  
complete

Since a powerful machine is certain to be in full control of such matters, the nomination and election of judges is the point at which a boss can get the most powerful leverage on the courts. In communities free from machine rule the influence of the bar association may virtually determine the selection of judges, and public opinion may insist upon the retention of those who have proved their independence and fairness. Under boss control judges of the latter type may be "turned down flat" when the time comes for their renomination. In extreme cases nominations to judicial as to other offices may be put up at auction, bids being received in the guise of campaign contributions. In

Nomination  
and election  
of judges

<sup>1</sup> I. Marcossou, "The Fall of the House of Quay," *World's Work*, vol. xi, pp. 7119-7124 (Jan., 1906).

1899 the Mazet Committee elicited the fact that Tammany had established a tariff requiring candidates for the higher courts to pay from \$10,000 to \$25,000 for nominations. From the nominee to a place on the Supreme Court bench it collected the equivalent of a full year's salary, amounting to \$17,500.<sup>1</sup> It was common talk at the time among members of the New York Bar Association that sums ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000 and even \$100,000 had been paid for the highest judicial nominations. Of course rude terms such as "auctioning off" or "buying" offices are deprecated by machine politicians in connection with the process of making judicial nominations, and in fact the process itself is somewhat more subtle than these terms would imply. In the vernacular of a Tammany apologist, "the man is picked out, and somehow he gets to understand what's expected of him, and he ponies up—all from gratitude to the organization that honored him, see. Why not? He has fourteen years on the bench ahead of him, and ten thousand other lawyers would be willin' to put up twice as much to be in his shoes."<sup>2</sup> At present the New York Penal Law (§§ 767, 780) expressly prohibits campaign contributions by judicial candidates except such as are authorized under the Corrupt Practices Act.

#### Judicial patronage

As a rule, courts have comparatively little patronage to bestow in the form of permanent appointive offices. From the point of view of the machine, however, no job is so small as to be negligible and under its sway every tipstaff has a certain political task to perform in his home ward in addition to his official duties at the courthouse. In exceptional cases judges have managed to have concentrated in their hands the power of appointment to a large number of permanent positions. This occurred in the case of the president judge of the Municipal Court of Philadelphia, with the result that he speedily became a local political factor of prime importance. Finding the power of the judge's machine threatening their own prerogatives, the Vare in-

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Carr, "Campaign Funds and Campaign Scandals," *Outlook*, vol. lxxxix, pp. 549-554 (Nov. 4, 1905).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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terests secured from the present legislature the passage of the Aron bill, designed to reduce the political influence of the former to a nullity. Under the terms of this enactment the president judge is stripped of his exclusive powers, and the other judges, eight in number, are henceforth to share with him the task of parceling out the offices.

While in general the courts have very little patronage in the form of permanent offices at their disposal, certain of the higher courts do make a large number of important temporary appointments. These include appointments of appraisers, of guardians for wealthy orphans, of commissioners in condemnation proceedings, of referees in litigation which may involve millions of dollars, of receivers in bankruptcy cases who may be called upon to administer the affairs of great corporations during a considerable period of time. Appointments of this kind are considered highly honorable and sometimes carry with them princely fees. Naturally, therefore, they excite the keenest interest of machine leaders. Every influence the latter can bring to bear upon judges is employed, usually in a most tactful manner, to secure these "plums" for themselves or for dependents and favorites.

Temporary  
judicial ap-  
pointments

Finally it must be noted that besides appointments, permanent or temporary, courts are burdened with other duties of a purely administrative nature. Thus in some states they designate the newspapers in which legal advertisements appear. In Pennsylvania until the recent repeal of the Brooks law they granted saloon licenses. County courts, particularly in Western states, are burdened to an unusual degree with administrative tasks, a fact not without relation to the demand in that section for the recall of judges. When functions of this sort are assigned to courts it is inevitable that machine politicians will strive with all their might, albeit more quietly and tactfully, to influence judges, just as they do in the case of administrative officials pure and simple.

Administra-  
tive duties  
of courts

Control of the police department by the machine yields



Police and  
magistrates'  
courts

the best results only when it also controls police and magistrates' courts. The latter is essential if immunity is to be obtained for crime and vice interests and for heelers and organization voters in their numerous untoward difficulties with the penal code. Also when opponents of the machine get into trouble subservient magistrates may seize the opportunity to teach them a lesson by imposing the extreme penalties of the law. In many cities little or no effort is made to conceal the use of political influence for such ends. The ward or district leader himself appears in court and is listened to attentively before cases are disposed of by the magistrate on the bench. It is hardly necessary to say that such flagrant intervention is never attempted in courts of higher rank even by the most powerful machine leaders. If they must "reach" superior or supreme court judges the interview takes place in the profoundest secrecy or a confidential emissary is despatched. It is by such occult methods, if at all, that political influence is brought to bear on graft prosecutions, on the trial of important election offenders, or on large civil suits affecting the interests of the boss or his financial allies.

"Honest"  
and "dis-  
honest"  
graft

Machine politicians are wont to discriminate between "honest graft" and "dishonest graft." As an example of the former a very practical authority who "seen his opportunities and took 'em,"<sup>1</sup> may be quoted as follows:

"My party's in power in the city, and it's goin' to undertake a lot of public improvements. Well, I'm tipped off, say, that they're goin' to lay out a new park at a certain place. . . . I go to that place and I buy up all the land I can in the neighborhood. Then the board of this or that makes its plan public, and there is a rush to get my land, which nobody cared particular for before. Ain't it perfectly honest to charge a good price and make a profit on my investment and foresight? Of course, it is. Well, that's honest graft."

Fundamentally the distinction between honest and dishonest graft, as the same authority acknowledges later, is not a matter of ethics, but of caution. "A big city like

<sup>1</sup> W. L. Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*, p. 4.

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New York or Philadelphia," he says, "might be compared to a sort of Garden of Eden, from a political point of view. It's an orchard full of beautiful apple trees. One of them has got a big sign on it, marked: 'Penal Code Tree—Poison.' The other trees have lots of apples on them for all. Yet the fools go to the Penal Code Tree. . . . The other apples are good enough for me, and, O Lord! how many of them there are in a big city."

### ACTUAL RETURNS OF BOSSISM

A survey of the numerous agencies—legislative, executive, and judicial—through which the boss can procure money may well give the impression of almost unlimited financial power.<sup>1</sup> Nor can there be any doubt that they are productive of rich streams of revenue. It is part of the stock in trade of a successful boss to convince his following that his financial power is invincible. Observing, as many among them do, his apparently casual handling of what to them seem large sums of money, it is not hard to establish the legend that he is a financial as well as a political Napoleon, a legend which, by the way, is commonly accepted by the public at large. As a matter of fact this impression is grossly exaggerated. Not a few bosses extremely powerful in their day have been completely ruined not only in character, but in fortune. Some who were resourceful and cautious enough to survive all assaults made upon them have accumulated considerable estates. But not one of the great American fortunes, as wealth is reckoned in metropolitan centers of finance and industry, has been founded by a boss. Recently Pennsylvania lost two of the most successful machine leaders of this generation—Penrose, who had been almost absolute dictator of the Republican state organization for eighteen years, and

Exaggeration of financial power of bosses

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Merriam, *op cit.*, p. 161, gives an interesting catalogue of the resources which might be drawn upon by a local boss in full control of a city of 100,000. Tremendous as these may appear to be, they are nevertheless small, even in proportion, as compared with the resources open to the boss of a metropolitan city.

"Ed" Vare, who had dominated in the city of Philadelphia for nearly as long a period. For days following the deaths of these men newspapers published estimates of their wealth ranging from \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000 in the case of Vare and as high as \$20,000,000 in the case of Penrose. Appraisal showed the Vare estate to be worth \$595,191; the Penrose estate, \$744,419. A significant item of the Penrose estate was the sum of \$226,100 in notes of from \$100 to \$10,000 in denomination, found in his Washington safety deposit vault. Of earlier Philadelphia political leaders, McNichol, although a reputed millionaire, left only \$225,000; "Iz" Durham, on the other hand, left \$1,054,292. In fairness to Penrose it should be said that the great passion of his life was to exercise power and that he was exceptional among bosses in his disregard for money beyond his personal needs. The modest estate that he left is believed to be due almost wholly to a few fortunate mining ventures.

Expenses  
bosses must  
meet

It is not a difficult matter to explain the discrepancy between popular estimates of the wealth of bosses and the actual size of their estates as disclosed at death. First, bossism is a business which requires the assistance of an innumerable horde of understrappers and confederates, all of whom are as much "on the make" as their chieftain. Cox of Cincinnati was credited with the assertion that "there's only one divides up here," but it was an absurd boast. Nothing is more certain than that numerous and large deductions are made from most of the funds flowing into or out of the coffers of the boss. "Ed" Vare was credited with having contributed \$100,000 a year toward the financing of his machine in Philadelphia. Second, bossism is an extremely hazardous pursuit. In times of crisis the boss is often forced to pledge everything he possesses and to borrow money from every available source in order to pull through. Defeat in a crucial election may mean not only complete financial loss, but his dethronement and even criminal prosecution into the bargain. Finally few bosses have shown any great capacity in ordinary busi-

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ness lines, the Napoleonic legend to the contrary notwithstanding. Astute as they are in all political affairs, they have often shown themselves typical "lambs" in Wall Street.

In the expense account of bosses, particularly those who have "slum" wards to "take care of," a large item must always be charged off to social and charitable activities. Part of the expenses of ward clubs and other auxiliary associations may be recouped in membership dues, but still the leader's pocketbook is heavily drawn upon to pay deficits, defray the expenses of outings, and the like. In 1905, the contributions of Tammany to the relief of the poor was estimated to amount to from fifteen to twenty-five per cent of the total annually expended by New York's combined churches and benevolent societies.<sup>1</sup> Some idea of the number and variety of the demands made upon a district leader may be gathered from the following record of a day's work by "Plunkitt of Tammany Hall."<sup>2</sup>

Social and  
charitable  
activities

2 A. M.: Aroused from sleep by the ringing of his door bell; went to the door and found a bartender, who asked him to go to the police station and bail out a saloon keeper who had been arrested for violating the excise law. Furnished bail and returned to bed at three o'clock.

6 A. M.: Awakened by fire engines passing his house. Hastened to the scene of the fire, according to the custom of the Tammany district leaders, to give assistance to the fire sufferers if needed. Met several of his election district captains, who are always under orders to look out for fires, which are considered great vote-getters. Found several tenants who had been burned out, took them to a hotel, supplied them with clothes, fed them, and arranged temporary quarters for them until they could rent and furnish new apartments.

8:30 A. M.: Went to the police court to look after his constituents. Found six "drunks." Secured the discharge of four by a timely word with the judge, and paid the fines of two.

9 A. M.: Appeared in the municipal district court. Directed one of his district captains to act as counsel for a widow against

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Carr, *op cit.*, p. 550.

<sup>2</sup> W. L. Riordon, pp. 170-173, by the courtesy of Doubleday, Page & Co.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

whom dispossess proceedings had been instituted and obtained an extension of time. Paid the rent of a poor family about to be dispossessed and gave them a dollar for food.

11 A. M.: At home again. Found four men waiting for him. One had been discharged by the Metropolitan Railway Company for neglect of duty, and wanted the district leader to fix things. Another wanted a job on the road. The third sought a place on the Subway, and the fourth, a plumber, was looking for work with the Consolidated Gas Company. The district leader spent nearly three hours fixing things for the four men, and succeeded in each case.

3 P. M.: Attended the funeral of an Italian as far as the ferry. Hurried back to make his appearance at the funeral of a Hebrew constituent. Went conspicuously to the front both in the Catholic church and the synagogue, and later attended the Hebrew confirmation ceremonies in the synagogue.

7 P. M.: Went to district headquarters and presided over a meeting of election district captains. Each captain submitted a list of all the voters in his district, reported on their attitude toward Tammany, suggested who might be won over and how they could be won, told who were in need and who were in trouble of any kind, and the best way to reach them. District leader took notes and gave orders.

8 P. M.: Went to a church fair. Took chances on everything, bought ice cream for the young girls and the children. Kissed the little ones, flattered their mothers and took their fathers out for something down at the corner.

9 P. M.: At the clubhouse again. Spent ten dollars on tickets for a church excursion and promised a subscription for a new church bell. Bought tickets for a baseball game to be played by two nines from his district. Listened to the complaints of a dozen push-cart peddlers, who said they were persecuted by the police, and assured them he would go to Police Headquarters in the morning and see about it.

10:30 P. M.: Attended a Hebrew wedding reception and dance. Had previously sent a handsome wedding present to the bride.

12 P. M.: In bed.

Of course relief work on Plunkitt's lines does not meet with the approval of social workers. On the other hand,



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the extent to which it is carried on proves that it is extremely effective in building up a dependable political following. Moreover, it avoids the penalties provided by law for the old crude method of direct vote buying. That many of the recipients of relief at the hands of the boss accept it utterly without thought of a political bargain is beyond doubt. They regard it as evidence of his generosity, and their votes go with their gratitude. The fact that the help is given personally, without questions or red tape and at the time of greatest need, strengthens this feeling. As friends and neighbors who, perchance, recall the early poverty and struggles of the boss, it is easy for them to believe in his "big Irish heart." Indeed, considering the origin and character of many machine leaders, it is probable that their charitable activities are motivated not only by shrewd political calculation, but by a measure of warm human sympathy as well. Of course there are other recipients of aid at the hands of the boss who look upon him frankly as a modern Robin Hood. In their view the boss "takes from the rich and gives to the poor," which furnishes, however mistakenly, an additional motive for clan-like loyalty at the polls.

Effective-  
ness of  
political  
charities

### EFFECTS OF BOSSISM ON THE COMMUNITY

In spite of the fact that the prime motive of the boss is to make money, the large deductions due to the necessity of supporting the machine and its innumerable camp followers, to social and charitable donations, and to the extra hazardous nature of the pursuit itself all combine to render it anything but the Golconda of popular imagination. Much more important than the question of its productivity as an individual pursuit, however, is the question of the effects of bossism, not only financial, but political and moral as well, upon a boss-ridden community. Commenting upon the practice of Republican machine leaders of Philadelphia, the *New York Tribune*, itself a Republican paper, said: "They ultimately enjoyed a practical monopoly of

Effects of  
bossism  
on city  
finances

all city work, from which they amassed great fortunes while the city incurred high taxes and a staggering debt." As a matter of fact, the great fortunes were largely mythical, but "high taxes and staggering debt" are a stern reality of boss rule. Writing of the Tweed régime in New York City, E. Dana Durand reaches the conclusion that "the total addition to the permanent debt due to this brief reign of corruption was over sixty-one million. Possibly ten million more of the assessment bonds still unfunded in 1874 may likewise be fairly charged directly to the Ring."<sup>1</sup> In general, machine rule is strongly favorable to bond issues. Such issues gain the friendship of powerful financial interests, furnish large sums for public contracts which give employment to political contractors and local laborers, and, finally, they have the advantage of postponing ultimate payment for a term of years during which the comparatively small burdens imposed by interest and sinking-fund charges are juggled as much as possible. Often the plea is made that the machine keeps taxes down, but analysis of all the facts usually reveals its falsity.

**Bossism  
and  
business**

Bossism reacts in many devious ways upon the business interests of a community. Economists and political scientists who have struggled so long with the problem of the incidence of taxation would find an incomparably rich and almost virgin field in the study of the incidence of bossism. Vice and criminal interests, of course, have every reason to prefer machine rule. In general, big business may seem to gain large immediate benefits from boss control. Under corrupt conditions it is always more successful than small scale business in avoiding taxation and other public burdens. Big business can compete more successfully for franchises and contracts. In the long run, however, the financial advantages thus gained are likely to prove illusory. Corrupt politicians soon learn to collect "all the traffic will bear" not only when franchises are granted, but constantly thereafter through "strike" legislation and crooked administrative regulation. On more than one occasion big

<sup>1</sup> *Finances of New York City*, p. 146.

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business interests have been forced into open revolt against the extortionate practices of the machine. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that corporate interests are obliged to recoup themselves for the costs of political promotion by charging higher rates to the consumer. Thus the vicious economic circle is complete. Business interests pay the boss, the boss doles out some portion of his takings to the poor in charity and entertainment, the poor and the great mass of consumers foot the bill ultimately in higher tax rates and slipshod public service, in higher street-car fares and higher rates for gas and electric light. From this angle the conception of the boss as a modern Robin Hood becomes an absurdity that would be laughable if it were not so menacing.

Unquestionably, however, the political and moral consequences of machine rule far outweigh in gravity all the economic burdens it imposes upon the community. Bossism is thoroughly reactionary in its defense of old abuses and its opposition to reforms designed to bring about honesty in elections and efficiency in government. The difficulty, nay, at times the seeming impossibility of making headway against it accounts in large part for the political apathy of many otherwise good citizens. Its toleration of vice and crime is a demoralizing influence that reaches every class in the community. Property losses, losses of character, injuries, and loathsome disease stalk in its trail. The machine conception of politics as a money-making pursuit has ruined the careers of innumerable men capable under happier conditions of real leadership and public service. The immunity which its servants enjoy in spite of their constant violations of the penal code destroys respect for law in large sections of the population. In this connection the use of political influence in police and magistrates' courts has a peculiarly deplorable effect. To many poor and ignorant citizens who, like Liliom, have nothing to do with superior and appellate jurisdictions either in this world or the next, these courts represent all that they know of law and justice. And the knowledge which they

Political  
and moral  
conse-  
quences of  
machine  
rule

gain by actual experience of the use of "pull" in police and magistrates' courts is calculated to make of them anything but good citizens.<sup>1</sup>

Opposition  
to bossism

On the other hand, the situation is far from hopeless. Machine rule represents a power so great and so honey-combed with abuses that it breeds opposition as well as apathy. If it is confined to or more largely developed in one party there is a chance for the other party to win a sweeping victory with an anti-machine platform and ticket. For this reason bossism is always more circumspect and less grasping where two parties confront each other on something like even terms. In states like Pennsylvania, where the Democratic opposition is so weak as to be almost hopeless, machine leaders are more likely to take long chances. Even under such conditions, however, there are limits, albeit somewhat indefinite, to the power of the boss, as Quay discovered in 1898 and Vare in 1911. Given "a long train of abuses and usurpations" on the part of the machine, the result is that reform and independent movements spring up within the dominant party itself. At such times the bosses are wont to abjure their malpractices, promise amendment, and seek out citizens of high character, whom somehow they always seem able to cajole, to head their ticket. Conveniently forgetting their own secret relations with large corporations, they pose as friends of the plain people, determined to protect them against designing malefactors of great wealth enrolled under the independent banner. They denounce reformers as hypocritical, self-seeking "highbrows," utterly devoid of practical sense or of sympathy with the masses. Newspapers opposed to them are "the subsidized press." In such struggles reformers and independents are at great disadvantage. Knowing little of organization they must nevertheless build up an organization hurriedly. In the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. H. Smith, *Justice and the Poor; the Survey of Criminal Justice in Cleveland, Ohio* (1921), made for the Cleveland Foundation under the direction of Dean Pound; F. J. Goodnow and F. G. Bates, *Municipal Government*, pp. 265-269.

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use of political trickery they would be outclassed even if their principles did not forbid resort to it. Despite these difficulties, independent movements have been victorious, at least temporarily, in so many cities and states that machine leaders have lost a great deal of their former impudence.

In spite of the reactionary and self-interested opposition of bosses, a large number of reform laws have been enacted which have brought about material changes in their practice. Among these should be mentioned civil-service reform, the Australian ballot, direct primaries, corrupt practices acts, the short ballot, direct legislation, the recall, and in cities the commission and city manager forms of government. Improvements in administrative practice and in budget and accounting methods make many old-time abuses impossible or at least much easier to detect. A large number of citizens' associations keep careful watch over public business and employ experts to probe malpractices. Public opinion is more alert. Even bosses know that "you can't fool all the people all the time," although they are inclined to believe that "you can always invent a new way to fool them." Certain it is that with each fresh effort to limit its power the machine puts forth an amazing amount of ingenuity and patience to gain its ends by evasion. Nevertheless, the crude raising of bills as practiced by Tweed or the limitless speculation with public funds as practiced under Quay would be impossible in New York City and Pennsylvania to-day.

Effect of  
reform  
legislation

No doubt such improvement as may be discerned in the practice of bosses is due more largely to fear of penalties than to any change of purpose or of moral standards on their part. Together with these changes in the methods of bossism some evidence has developed tending to the belief that its grip upon the country is not quite so firm or extensive as it once was. Certainly there are now no state bosses whose power can be compared with that of Platt, Quay, or Penrose. With the passing of these great machine leaders numerous prophecies were made to the effect

Is bossism  
declining?



that bossism itself was doomed to disappear. Wherever it has once been firmly established, however, it has shown remarkable recuperative powers even after the most grueling defeats. Also it must be remembered that even if the great state bosses have passed from the political stage a host of minor ward, city, and county bosses are still active and powerful. Predictions that machine rule itself is soon to disappear must be based upon something more fundamental than the death or defeat of individual leaders. Not until it can be shown that the broad general causes of bossism, noted earlier in this chapter, have ceased to operate are such predictions to be accepted at their face value.

Bossism inconsistent  
with  
American  
ideals

As a matter of fact, most of these general causes of bossism still prevail, and seem likely to do so for the next few decades. One of them, however, is being rapidly changed, namely the political thought and practice of the country on such matters as the spoils system, the fear of a strong administration, the doctrine of the separation of powers. With the extension of reforms due to this change of thought and practice, particularly reforms along the lines discussed in the succeeding chapters of this volume, a further improvement may be expected. Changes in party and governmental mechanism are not enough, however. Some of the causes currently assigned for the prevalence of bossism, notably the apathy of so-called good citizens, are not so much causes as excuses of which every man and woman who possesses a backbone should be heartily ashamed. Bossism, as we have seen, is a distinctive product of American political conditions. None the less it is a product inconsistent at every point with our ideals of government and contradictory to the inclinations of every independent citizen. Only by the higher civic interest and more strenuous exertions of such citizens may the fight against bossism be won.

## MACHINES AND BOSSES

### BOOK NOTES

IN *The Shame of the Cities* and *The Struggle for Self-government* (1904, 1906), Lincoln Steffens collects materials on the abuses of machine rule from a large number of cities and states. The significance of his findings is critically discussed by H. J. Ford, "Municipal Corruption," *Pol. Sci. Quar.* Vol. XIX, pp. 673-686 (Dec., 1904). For a brief general summary of conditions the country over S. P. Orth, *The Boss and the Machine* (1918), is also useful. In various chapters of his *Corruption in American Politics and Life* (1910), the author discusses the nature of political corruption, its extent, and the various apologies made for it. E. A. Ross, *Sin and Society* (1907), analyzes the same general topic admirably from the sociological point of view. W. J. Ghent, *Our Benevolent Feudalism* (1902), may be taken as an excellent presentation not untouched by satire of the Socialist attitude toward machine rule. Henry Champernowne (D. M. Means) *The Boss* (1894), is an extremely clever parody based on Machiavelli's *Prince*.

The only extended historical account of a single political machine is G. Myers, *History of Tammany Hall* (2d ed., 1917). For vigorous indictments of machine misrule in New York when Tammany was in the heyday of its power, see W. M. Ivins, *Machine Politics* (1887); and Theodore Roosevelt, *Essays on Practical Politics* (1888). For a disclosure of "the mental operations of perhaps the most thoroughly practical politician of the day," W. L. Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* (1905), is extremely interesting, and in spite of its amusing passages is to be taken largely as a study in political realism. D. G. Thompson, *Politics in a Democracy* (1893), is an attempted philosophical justification of machine methods, using Tammany chiefly as an exemplar.

Tom L. Johnson, *My Story* (1913), presents a vivid picture from the extreme progressive point of view of machine politics in Ohio, with particular reference to the

struggle over the renewal of street railway franchises in Cleveland. Brand Whitlock, *Forty Years of It* (1916), is a work of similar character, with the mayor's office in Toledo as the center from which observations are made. On conditions at the other end of the same state Wright, *Bossism in Cincinnati*, is useful.

Machine rule in other states and cities is dealt with as follows: John Wanamaker, *Speeches on Quayism and Boss Domination in Pennsylvania* (1898); Lynn Haines, *The Minnesota Legislature of 1911*; B. B. Lindsey, *The Beast and the Jungle* (1910), a work similar to those of Johnson and Whitlock quoted above, dealing with conditions in Denver and the State of Colorado; and on conditions in San Francisco and the state of California; Fremont Older, *My Own Story*, and F. Hichborn, *Story of the Session of the California Legislature, 1909, 1911, 1913, 1915*, also by the same author, *The "System" as Uncovered by the San Francisco Graft Prosecution* (1915). Lynn Haines, *Your Congress* (1915), is "an interpretation of the political and parliamentary forces that dominate law making" in the national field.

All the general works on American political parties cited under Ch. I, particularly the longer treatise by Ostrogorski, devote more or less space to machines and bosses. Especially worthy of mention is C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System* (1922), which under the general heading of "The Spoils System" (Chs. IV to VIII), presents an admirable systematic discussion of this field. P. S. Reinsch, *American Legislatures and Legislative Methods* (1913), Ch. VIII gives an excellent brief account of the perversion of legislative action by the machine. Other brief references of great value may be found as follows: H. J. Ford, *Rise and Growth of American Politics* (1898), Chs. XXIII to XXV; H. Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (1911), Chs. V and VI; and F. J. Goodnow, *Politics and Administration* (1900), Ch. VIII.

For general discussions of municipal bossism the student should consult F. C. Howe, *The City; The Hope of De-*

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mocracy (1905), Chs. VI and VII; J. J. Hamilton, *The Dethronement of the City Boss* (1909); and W. B. Munro, *Government of American Cities* (1921), Ch. VII; and by the same author, *Municipal Government and Administration* (1923), Vol. I, Chs. XIV to XVI.

Documentary materials in profusion may be found in the reports of the Lexow Committee of the New York legislature (1894); the Allds Committee of the New York senate (1910); the Boston Finance Commission (14 vols., 1908-20); the Lorimer investigations of the U. S. Senate (1911-12); N. Y., N. H. & H. R. R. investigation, Interstate Commerce Committee Reports, No. 6569 (1914); and Sen. Doc. No. 543, Sixty-third Cong., 2d Sess., Vol. I and II (1914).

In the form of fiction the short stories by Brand Whitlock, *The Gold Brick* (1910), dealing with machine operations, are easily the best of their kind. Naturally so striking a figure as the boss has been abundantly employed by novelists. Thus P. L. Ford, *The Honorable Peter Stirling* (1894), presents a rather sympathetic view of Tammany's method and spirit; A. H. Lewis, *The Boss*, is a mordant picture of the Croker type; H. R. Miller, *The Man Higher Up* (1910), and *His Rise to Power* (1911), describe in thinly veiled fiction the Quay régime in Pennsylvania; Theodore Dreiser, *The Financier* (1912), and *The Titan* (1914), are tremendously powerful and detailed accounts of the interrelations of politics and finance in Philadelphia and Chicago; Winston Churchill, *Coniston* (1906), *Mr. Crewe's Career* (1908), *A Far Country* (1915), and *The Dwelling Place of Light* (1917), compose a sustained and impressive series which has been widely read; Donald Richberg, *A Man of Purpose* (1922), discusses admirably the political frame-up engineered by corrupt politicians to assassinate the character of their opponents. Booth Tarkington, *The Gentleman from Indiana* (1905); and Samuel Blythe, *The Price of Place* (1913) and *The Fakers* (1915) are also interesting. The novels of William Allen White, Robert Herrick, and

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Ernest Poole deal effectively with the broader social background of industrial and political forces. For extended lists of novels and essays with brief critical comment the reader should consult C. E. Merriam, *American Political Ideas* (1920), Ch. VIII of which is devoted to a discussion of political ideas in American literature.



## CHAPTER X

### NOMINATIONS: CAUCUS AND CONVENTION SYSTEM, DIRECT PRIMARIES

THE process of making nominations, it will be recalled, is the distinctive function of political parties. Although at times poorly performed, it constitutes an essential and highly useful service to the state. Reformers may deplore the enormous amount of effort and money apparently required for the making of nominations, and sigh for that ideal condition in which "office seeks the man, not man the office." But under a democratic and highly elaborated form of government such as our own it is essential that there should be some definite and well organized system for bringing forth at the appointed times the tens of thousands of candidates needed for elective offices of every description. The absence of a nominating system of this character would leave the great mass of more or less indifferent voters without guidance, and also without the intense interest which a good contest always arouses; there would be no means to bring about a sharp focusing of popular attention upon those personalities possessing both the qualifications and inclination for public office; many minor offices would be left unfilled, and probably not a few of the major offices would be filled unsatisfactorily by that one out of a considerable and indefinite group of receptive, but undesigned candidates who happened to have behind him a minority vote sufficient to win by plurality on election day.

Social value  
of the  
nominating  
function

Quite apart from motives connected with the welfare of the state, practical politicians have always realized the immense importance of definite party designation. With

Practical  
political  
importance  
of nomina-  
tions

the exception of a few appointments made because of vacancies, every one of the more than 180,000 persons holding elective public offices in the United States to-day received some form of nomination prior to election.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, throughout large sections of the country one or the other of the two great parties is so strongly in the majority that a nomination at its hands is virtually equivalent to election. In such sections, of course, the nominating process is of greater importance and attracts more interest than the purely formal elections which follow.

Elaborate  
machinery  
of nomina-  
tions in the  
United  
States

No other country has developed such elaborate, complicated, and costly nominating machinery as the United States. Historically it has evolved through three periods, each characterized, so far as the more important offices were concerned, by a dominant type: I. The Legislative Caucus, from the Colonial Period to 1830; II. The Delegate Convention System, 1830 to 1903; and III. The Direct-primary Election System, 1903 to the Present Time.

#### I. THE LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS FROM THE COLONIAL PERIOD TO 1830

Colonial  
methods of  
nomina-  
tion

During the Colonial period and immediately following, elective offices were comparatively few in number, the suffrage was greatly restricted, and the influence of aristocratic or propertied families was well established. Under these conditions, gentlemen were accustomed to bring forward their own candidacies, or their names might be proposed at gatherings of the neighborhood gentry, which were often quite as convivial as they were political. In cities, clubs of all sorts and trade organizations some-

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*, p. 247, estimates the number of elective offices in the United States as follows: federal, 500; state, 500; state legislatures, 7,500; county, 45,000; elective judges, 1,500; offices in cities with over 8,000 inhabitants, 10,000; in cities with less than 8,000 inhabitants, 100,000; in New England towns, 15,000; total 180,000. This does not include the thousands of elective offices in other towns, in townships and in school districts.

## NOMINATIONS

times nominated their leading members for public office. Over wider areas, these easy-going and diffuse methods were helped out by committees of correspondence.

Early in the eighteenth century, however, a fairly definite and quite effective piece of local nominating machinery known as the caucus was developed. Two etymologies have been suggested for this word, one deriving it from the Algonquin Indian "kaw-kaw-was," meaning to talk, to give advice, to instigate; the other referring it to the caulkers' meeting or caulkers' club to which dockyard workers in Boston belonged.<sup>1</sup> A vivid contemporary picture of the Colonial caucus is presented in the diary of John Adams, under date of February, 1763, as follows:

Origin of  
the caucus

This day learned that the Caucus club meets at certain times in the garret of Tom Dawes, the adjutant of the Boston regiment. He has a large house, and he has a movable partition in his garret which he takes down, and the whole club meets in one room. There they smoke tobacco till you cannot see from one end of the garret to the other. There they drink flip, I suppose, and they choose a moderator who puts questions to the vote regularly; and selectmen, assessors, collectors, fire-wards, and representatives are regularly chosen before they are chosen in the town.<sup>2</sup>

When it became necessary to nominate candidates for the governorship and other state offices, this function was assumed at first by a meeting of all the members of a given party in the legislature. In 1800 the same system was established in Congress for the choice of presidential candidates. Considering the difficulties of travel at that time, there is nothing unnatural in the development of the legislative caucus. Members of the legislature and Congressmen were political leaders who reflected the opinions of their constituents. Obligated by legislative duties to spend some time in the capital, it was easy for them to meet and designate candidates.

The legisla-  
tive caucus

But this system suffered from one obvious defect—the

<sup>1</sup> M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, vol. i, p. 120, n., gives further details on these etymologies.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Works of John Adams*, vol. ii, p. 144.

The  
"mixed" or  
"mongrel"  
caucus

absence of representatives from many districts. For example, those districts which failed to elect a Federalist to the legislature were not represented in the legislative caucus of that party. To meet this objection, the practice grew up in some states of choosing party delegates from districts not represented by a member of the party in the legislature. At the appointed time such delegates would make their way to the state capital to participate with members of the party holding seats in the legislature in a "mixed" or "mongrel" caucus to select nominees for statewide offices. Simple as this arrangement was, it was of major importance in that it pointed the way to the transformation of the legislative caucus into the delegate convention.

Public criticism of the  
legislative  
caucus

However, the nominating caucuses both in state legislatures and in Congress soon came to be criticized on much more serious grounds. They were denounced as oligarchic and corrupt, as Jacobinical conclaves which flagrantly usurped powers belonging to the people. Believers in the system of checks and balances also saw in the caucus a means whereby the legislative branch, having arrogated to itself the power of conferring offices in other departments, would come to dominate the whole government, contrary to the provisions and spirit of the Constitution. During the era of good feeling the power of the congressional caucus visibly decayed and under the violent attack launched against it by the rising Jacksonian democracy of the new West, "King Caucus" was dethroned in national politics. Even before this was accomplished the anti-caucus movement had made considerable progress in the states. During the presidency of Jefferson, Delaware took the lead in going over to the convention system. No doubt the decision to do so was made easier by its small size, enabling delegates from every part of the state to meet readily in some centrally located place. In the larger commonwealths the change came about more slowly, but by the time the first national conventions were held (1830-

## NOMINATIONS

32), delegate conventions had been introduced everywhere except in the south.

### II. THE DELEGATE CONVENTION SYSTEM, 1830-1903

At the basis of the delegate convention system was the local popular caucus or primary, which was continued unchanged in form and increased in power from the preceding period. This was, in theory at least, a meeting of all the voters of a party in a given ward, town, or township. Previously it had made nominations for the elective offices of its territory. To this was now added the function of electing delegates to city, county, and sometimes to district conventions. These conventions selected candidates for elective offices in their respective districts, and in their turn chose delegates to the higher district and state conventions.

Delegates  
chosen by  
local caucus

Representation in all these conventions was apportioned to districts on the basis of the party vote in each. Delegates and alternates at large to the national convention were chosen by the state conventions. District alternates and delegates to the national convention were chosen by congressional district conventions, except that in New York and several other states delegates to the Democratic state convention met in groups according to their congressional districts, and chose such delegates.

Representa-  
tion in  
conventions

This complicated and imposing hierarchy of conventions rested upon the basis, in theory purely democratic, of the thousands of popular caucuses or primaries in local communities throughout the country. Above its democratic foundation the whole pyramidal structure of delegate conventions was assumed to be thoroughly representative in character. Delegates represented either voters in caucus assembled or conventions chosen by them in the last analysis. They met presumptively to register the voters' will, at first in the choice of candidates; and later also in the drafting of formal party platforms.

The hierar-  
chy of con-  
ventions

Delegates to conventions were confined solely to these



The work  
of conven-  
tions

two duties, whereas members of the earlier legislative caucuses had many duties to perform in the midst of which their responsibility for nominations was not easily fixed. Moreover, the work of conventions lasted only a few days, it was jealously watched by rival aspirants and factions, it commanded a lively public interest, and was immediately subjected to the searching tests of a campaign and the final decision of a popular election.

Frauds and  
abuses  
practiced in  
primaries

Considering the theoretical perfection and the practical safeguards of the popular primary and delegate convention scheme, one is amazed at the number of gross frauds and malpractices it developed within a short time after it was adopted. No more striking evidence can be cited of the fierce unscrupulousness of political ambition and factional strife in the United States. Popular caucuses or primaries were frequently dominated and terrorized by "floaters" and "repeaters" drawn from the lowest elements of the population, native or foreign born. Violence often occurred in "tough" wards, and a wise political leader arranged with the police in advance of the meeting so that they might have no difficulty in detecting and throwing out "trouble makers," belonging, of course, to the opposite faction. The meeting places chosen for popular caucuses or primaries were in or immediately adjacent to saloons, or over livery stables, or in other places likely to deter the more respectable class of citizens from attending. "Preparatory to the general election of 1884, there were held in the various districts of New York ten hundred and seven primaries and political conventions of all parties, and of these no less than six hundred and sixty-three took place in liquor saloons."<sup>1</sup> Sometimes rooms would be selected too small to hold all the voters, word being passed out to the ward heelers to take possession at an early hour, thus excluding effectually the independent element. Or, also by prearrangement, the gang and its cohorts would make their appearance in advance of the

<sup>1</sup> T. Roosevelt, "Machine Politics in New York City," *Century*, vol. xxxiii, pp. 74-82 (Nov., 1886).

## NOMINATIONS

time set, turn the clock an hour ahead, put through a cut-and-dried program, and jeer the independents when they arrived on the scene. This particular trick was called holding a "snap caucus." Primaries were often "packed" by voters of one faction or another, or even by voters of the opposite party. Bribery was resorted to if necessary, and the boss or coterie of machine leaders pulled every wire to secure the nomination of the "slate" of candidates selected by themselves.

As an emanation from popular primaries delegate conventions suffered from all the evils characteristic of the former, and in addition developed quite a number peculiar to themselves. In minor conventions men of inferior type, sometimes of dubious or even criminal reputation, were present and active. Few, however, reached such depths of depravity as the Cook County convention, held in Chicago in 1896, described as follows:

Additional  
abuses  
practiced in  
conventions

Of the delegates, those who have been on trial for murder numbered 17; sentenced to the penitentiary for murder or manslaughter and served sentence, 7; served terms in the penitentiary for burglary, 36; served terms in the penitentiary for picking pockets, 2; served terms in the penitentiary for arson, 1; ex-Bridewell and jailbirds identified by detectives, 84; keepers of gambling houses, 7; keepers of houses of ill fame, 2; convicted of mayhem, 3; ex-prize fighters, 11; pool-room proprietors, 2; saloon keepers, 265; lawyers, 14; physicians, 3; grain dealers, 2; political employees, 148; hatter, 1; stationer, 1; contractors, 4; grocer, 1; sign painter, 1; plumbers, 4; butcher, 1; druggist, 1; furniture supplies, 1; commission merchants, 2; ex-policemen, 15; dentist, 1; speculators, 2; justices of the peace, 3; ex-constable, 1; farmers, 6; undertakers, 3; no occupation, 71. Total delegates, 723.<sup>1</sup>

A considerable period of time intervened between primaries and conventions which was utilized to the utmost to bring pressure to bear upon delegates and even to bribe them or to buy their "proxies." Many delegates were chosen who had no intention of attending the convention,

"Proxies"

<sup>1</sup> R. M. Easley, "The Sine-qua-Non of Caucus Reform," *Review of Reviews*, vol. xvi, pp. 322-324 (Sept., 1897).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

and who, for a consideration, were willing to transfer their credentials to unscrupulous politicians. Later these proxies were voted in blocks on the floor of the convention. Proxy voting is now prohibited by law in some states, and by party rules in others. Also the general practice of selecting alternates to take the place of delegates in case the latter are unable to attend the convention has helped to break up this particular abuse.

### Contesting delegations

If a split or bolt occurred in the primaries each faction sent its own set of delegates to the convention. The faction in control of the convention seldom bothered itself about the merits of the case and would promptly seat that one of two contesting delegations which could be depended upon to support its slate. There were times, however, when party harmony seemed so desirable that both sets of delegates were seated, a half vote being given to each of the members. Although often threatened, violence was not so common in conventions, at least those of higher grade, as in primaries. On the other hand, boss or machine control was more complete. Steam-roller methods were often in evidence, and one convention held under the sway of Platt, in New York, was referred to as having been run by electricity. Much depended upon the choice of a presiding officer who could be relied upon to recognize only adherents of his own faction, side track hostile motions, and gavel things through promptly regardless of clamor and even of the vote of the delegates.

### General character of primaries and conventions

Of course all these abuses were not practiced in every primary or convention. Primaries in particular reflected the character of the districts in which they were held. In rural sections such meetings were usually free from violence and the cruder forms of fraud. But in city wards inhabited by the lowest class of native or foreign born population, violence and fraud were fairly common, unless indeed the control of the ring or the boss was so complete as to make opposition hopeless. Some states and cities had rules sufficiently stringent and well enough administered to prevent the most flagrant abuses and a few prom-

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ising beginnings were made in the way of legal regulation. Everywhere, however, the professional political class opposed these reforms. Naturally the abuses cited above were most prevalent in the caucuses and conventions where regulation was least developed.

At this distance of time it is easy to prescribe further legal remedies which might have saved the old convention system.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact every resource of oratory and exhortation was expended in vain to induce the better class of citizens to attend the primary and thus to uplift the whole nominating machinery and political life of the country. The apathy of good citizens was denounced in countless speeches, sermons, and editorials; indeed, it was commonly pointed out as one of the chief causes of current abuses. Frankly, the task seemed too difficult ever to be accomplished with the tools at hand. By dint of long and bitter experience the great public which was not interested professionally in politics had come to the conclusion that the convention system was dominated by irresponsible leaders, that it excluded the rank and file from effective participation in party management, that it turned out candidates oblivious to the wishes of their constituents—in short, that it was completely and incurably boss-ridden. As in the case of the old legislative caucus, what was demanded was not amendment, but abolition. The result was the general introduction of the direct-primary election system.

Futile exhortations to reform

### III. DIRECT-PRIMARY ELECTION SYSTEM, 1903 TO THE PRESENT TIME

Essentially the direct-primary election system is a system for making nominations by popular elections held under state management. When applied to all offices it abolishes not only the state convention, but lesser conventions in districts, counties, and cities, and popular caucuses

Nature of the direct-primary system

<sup>1</sup> For a list of such reforms, see A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States*, p. 187.

or primaries as well.<sup>1</sup> The convention system was a representative or indirect method of making nominations; the direct-primary election system is direct in that it places the nominating power in the hands of the voters themselves.

Direct  
primary a  
legal  
creation

The direct-primary election system also differs sharply from the legislative caucus and convention systems which preceded it in that it is established by law. Both of the earlier nominating methods rested upon party rules and customs. Toward the end of the delegate convention period it is true that attempts were made to eliminate abuses both in conventions and in popular primaries or caucuses by legislation. But the direct-primary election system is thoroughly official in character, and its smallest details are determined by law. The change thus brought about is perhaps the most sweeping that has occurred in our party history. Taken in connection with the Australian ballot, it has brought a large part of our extra constitutional governmental machinery under legal control, while at the same time it has given parties a legal standing which formerly they did not possess.

Extension  
of the  
direct-  
primary  
system

Introduction of the direct-primary election system began in 1903. For a few years thereafter progress was slow, but between 1907 and 1915 it spread with such rapidity that at the end of the latter year all the states of the union, with the exception of five, had adopted it in some form.<sup>2</sup> However, there are wide differences among

<sup>1</sup> Some confusion may be caused by this similarity of names. The popular primary or caucus was an assemblage of voters in small local units to make nominations and choose delegates to conventions. Under a thoroughgoing direct-primary election system the voters of a party do not meet as a body, but go to the polls as individuals to express by ballot their preference among candidates for nomination.

<sup>2</sup> The list with dates is as follows: Wisconsin, 1903; Oregon, 1904; Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Washington, 1907; Kansas, Ohio, and Oklahoma, 1908; Arizona, 1909-12; California, Idaho, Michigan, New Hampshire, Nevada, and Tennessee, 1909; Colorado, Illinois, and Maryland, 1910; Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Wyoming, 1911; Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, and Virginia, 1912; Florida, New York, and Pennsylvania, 1913; Indiana, North Carolina, Vermont, and West Virginia, 1915. In the following states the direct primary is conducted under the rules of the Democratic



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the states as to the number or kind of offices brought under the direct-primary election system, and hence in the extent to which it eliminates conventions. Some states use it both for public and for party offices; others only for party offices. The New York law of 1911 and the Indiana law of 1915 restricted the direct-primary election system to the nomination of the principal state officers, a practice, by the way, which had the advantage of making the primary ballot short. In some states, on the other hand, local and county offices only were brought under the direct-primary election system, nominations for the more important state offices being made by conventions.

At the other end of the scale are states which, like Pennsylvania and New Jersey, employ the direct-primary election system to nominate all elective officers of the state, districts, counties, cities, and towns; and also to choose party officers such as members of the city, county, and state committees. This has eliminated conventions entirely in Pennsylvania, although, of course, unofficial, and often secret, slate-making conclaves meet, frequently in advance of primary elections. The only election officers not chosen at primary elections in Pennsylvania are presidential electors, who are named by the national candidates of the various parties. It should be observed that when the direct-primary election system is used, as in Pennsylvania, for the choice of party officers it serves as an actual election of such officers. As a consequence primary ballots in such states sometimes rival in length ballots used in general elections and are much more difficult to mark, since there is no opportunity to indicate a straight vote by making a single cross mark in a party square. In a few states efforts are made to enlighten the voter by

Long  
primary  
ballots

party, but is not established for all parties by statute: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, South Carolina, and Texas. The five states which have not adopted it are Connecticut, Delaware, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Utah. Utah has a law of the old type permitting parties to hold primary elections. In Delaware, delegates to the state conventions are chosen in direct-primary elections. From table by A. N. Holcombe, *American Year Book*, 1919, p. 229.

permitting a candidate to state briefly on the primary ballot any official act or policy to which he wishes to commit himself. The resulting slogans in six, eight, or twelve words may or may not be edifying, but a polling place is ill adapted for the study of some dozens of such pronouncements. Publicity pamphlets containing photographs and sketches of candidates are also issued in a few states.

The voter  
and his  
primary  
ballot

Apart from these aids, the ordinary voter is apt to know nothing about the long list of candidates whose names appear on the primary ballot, with two exceptions: (1) those prominent contestants for state-wide offices who have been discussed at length in the newspapers; and (2) those seeking local offices whom he happens to know personally. He may, of course, take with him a prepared list or marked sample ballot kindly supplied him by the organization or by some group of independents. Otherwise his vote will be a thing of chance and patchwork save for the two exceptions noted above.<sup>1</sup>

Definition  
of parties  
in direct-  
primary  
laws

Another limitation of the scope of direct-primary elections, although not of the same practical importance as that relating to candidacies, is made by the definitions of political parties included in the laws of several states. The test for recognition as a political party on the primary ballot takes the form of a certain number of voters or, more commonly, a certain percentage of the total vote cast in the preceding general election. Thus New York state defines a party as a political organization which polled at least 10,000 votes for governor at the last preceding election. Percentage tests vary from 1 per cent of the total vote in Maine, to 2 per cent in Illinois and Pennsylvania; 3 per cent in Massachusetts and California, 5 per cent in Florida, 10 per cent in Idaho and Tennessee; 20 per cent in Kentucky, and 25 per cent in Alabama. Provision is occasionally made whereby newly formed parties may receive recognition by filing a petition signed by a certain

<sup>1</sup> See the author's discussion of "Voters' Vagaries," *National Municipal Review*, vol. 2, p. 161 (March, 1921).

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number or percentage of voters. For the latter purpose California, Oregon, and Idaho require petitions signed by 3, 5, and 10 per cent of the voters respectively. North Carolina requires a petition signed by 10,000 voters. While these tests exclude from the operations of the primary-election system a few of the lesser minority parties, the latter are accorded the privilege of making their own nominations by petition and of having these nominations printed on the official ballots used in general elections.

As in general elections, so also in primary elections, the ballots used are official in character, printed under public authority, and voted under public election officers with all the safeguards of the Australian ballot system. To secure a place on the primary ballot petitions must be circulated on behalf of each aspirant. The necessary minimum number or percentage of signatures to be obtained is fixed by law roughly in accordance with the importance of the office sought. Thus in Pennsylvania, the requirement for President or United States Senator is at least one hundred signatures in each of ten counties; for state offices and other offices to be filled by vote of the state at large, at least one hundred signatures in each of five counties; for district representative in Congress and state senator two hundred signatures; for member of the state House of Representatives, one hundred signatures; for minor local and party offices, ten signatures; for local inspectors of elections, only five signatures. Michigan requires the signatures of from 2 to 4 per cent of the party voters; California 1 per cent of the party vote in at least ten counties; Illinois  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1 per cent for less important offices. The only exception apparently to the requirement of a petition occurred in Idaho, where the law of 1909, since repealed, offered aspirants the option of securing a place on the primary ballot either by obtaining signatures representing a small percentage of the party vote, or by payment of small fees proportioned to the salaries of the offices sought.

In addition to fixing the number of signatures the primary law usually sets a date before which petitions may

Primary  
petitions

**Handling  
of petitions**

not be circulated, and it always states the date when petitions must be in the hands of some state officer, usually the secretary of state, or, for local offices, in the hands of some county official. These state or county officials are charged with the duty of passing upon the number and genuineness of signatures and petitions, and of certifying names which pass their tests for printing upon the official primary ballot. In general the enormous mass of petitions which are dumped into state and county offices before primary election are gone over rather perfunctorily. Sometimes, however, objection is made by rival candidates, signatures are scrutinized carefully, and a sufficient number may be rejected as forged or otherwise invalid to keep a name off the primary ballot. As a measure of prudence, therefore, it is usually worth while for a candidate to secure a safe margin of signatures in excess of the actual number fixed by law.

**The signers  
of petitions**

Nominating petitions may be circulated by the candidate himself or by friends and members of his campaign committee in such a way as to advertise his candidacy effectively. Often, however, petitions are kept at political headquarters, the "boys" being told to drop in and sign them. Except in the case of local offices or of conspicuous personalities, the average voter knows little or nothing about the character of the candidates named in the sheaf of nomination papers thrust before him, but in most cases he is willing to sign perfunctorily on the strength of the worker's assurance that they are all "all right." By law a voter may sign one petition only for each office to be filled, unless two or more persons are to be elected to the same office, in which case he may sign as many petitions as there are persons to be elected.

**"Petition  
pushers"**

Sometimes an effort is made to secure a number of signatures largely in excess of the requirements of the law for a given office as an evidence of the popularity of the candidate thus honored. In a few states, however, this practice is forbidden by law. Where, as in the case of state-wide offices, a considerable number of signatures

## NOMINATIONS

must be secured, it is not uncommon to employ purely commercial agents to get them, paying at the rate of, say, five cents a name in rural districts, and two or three cents in cities. In general, nominating petitions do not require anything like the large number of signatures needed for initiative, referendum, and recall petitions. Hence there is less excuse in the case of the former for the hiring of "petition pushers."

Nevertheless, frauds are sometimes committed in securing signatures. Local political leaders of the practical variety do not scruple to write in names of their heelers, knowing that the latter would swear to the genuineness thereof in the unlikely event of an investigation. In a notorious Pennsylvania case it was shown that a large number of signatures had been copied all in the same handwriting and in alphabetical order from the pages of a city directory.<sup>1</sup> Technically, this was not forgery, since the citizens whose names were borrowed were deemed to have suffered no loss thereby. But perjury was committed when, as is usually required in connection with the filing of nomination petitions, affidavit was made "that the signatures attached to the foregoing nomination paper are in the proper handwriting of the qualified electors named therein."

Frauds in  
securing  
signatures

Direct-primary elections are of two types—"open" or "closed." Open primaries, as used in Wisconsin and one or two other states, impose no test of party allegiance. The qualified voter who presents himself at the polls under this type of direct-primary election is handed the ballots of all the parties. In Wisconsin these are printed on separate sheets, but are fastened together at the top and folded. Or they may be printed on the same sheet, with perforated lines between the tickets of the various parties. Retiring to his booth, the voter privately separates the ticket of the party he wishes to vote from the others, marks and folds it, and upon emerging deposits it in the

"Open"  
and  
"closed"  
primaries

<sup>1</sup> *Report on the Jury Wheel Crime of 1912*, published by the People's Rights Association of Delaware County, 1915.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

regular ballot box, at the same time placing the unmarked tickets in a ballot box reserved for "blanks."

### Tests of party affiliation

Under the closed type of direct-primary election, on the other hand, the voter who wishes to participate must submit to a test of party affiliation, either sometime prior to, or at the primary itself. These tests differ considerably in kind and in the character of the authorities administering them, as will be explained later, but all of them have one feature in common, namely, that the voter must publicly affiliate himself with one of the political parties engaged in the primaries. Thereupon, he is handed the ballot of that party only. Voters who possess all the qualifications requisite for participation in general elections, but who do not comply with the prescribed tests of the closed primary, are not permitted to vote the ballot of any party in the primary election. They may, however, vote non-partisan primary ballots, if such ballots are being used at the same direct-primary election.

### Advantages of the open primary

The open primary has the advantage of preserving the secrecy of the voter's party affiliation. This is a matter of considerable importance to many persons who for business, social, or other reasons prefer to keep their party inclinations to themselves. It is easy to condemn such faint-hearted souls. On the other hand, one should remember that in connection with general elections enormous stress has been laid upon the right of the voter to a secret ballot, and all sorts of complicated devices have been employed to guarantee this right. After a generation of this kind of instruction it is no wonder that a large number of voters resent the tests employed in closed primaries and that a considerable minority of them refuse to comply with such tests, thus, of course, disfranchising themselves so far as primaries are concerned. Primaries of the open type do not rouse this resentment, nor exclude voters who because of timidity or an excess of independence refuse to disclose their party affiliation.

On the other hand, open primaries suffer from the serious defect that they interpose no barrier to raids made

## NOMINATIONS

by members of one party upon the primary ballot of another. For example, if a Republican member of Congress who has been a tower of strength to his party comes up for renomination, the Democrats of his district may throw enough votes to his opponent, a weaker and less well known man, to nominate the latter. And, of course, Republicans may interfere with Democratic nominations with equal ease. The temptation to indulge in this sort of guerilla warfare is particularly strong where, as is not infrequently the case, one party, because of lack of candidates, has no important contests on in the primary, while the other party has. In this respect the open type of direct primary election offers far less protection to party integrity than the old popular caucus. Interlopers, from other parties attempting to participate in the latter usually needed hospital treatment shortly thereafter.

Disadvantages of the open primary

Considering the gravity of this defect in the open type of direct primary election, it is not strange that the great majority of states have preferred the closed primary. Such changes as have been made of recent years are also in the latter direction.<sup>1</sup> It cannot be asserted, however, that the closed primary has found a definite solution of the problem of determining party affiliation of voters. "A perfectly working system would have sufficient flexibility to allow voters to pass from one party to the other as issues change or as individual opinions change, and at the same time would prevent the shifting of machine-controlled or other voters to the primaries of another party without any intention of supporting the party."<sup>2</sup> It is, however, much easier to state an ideal of this sort than to realize it in legislation and administration.

Closed primaries generally preferred

So far as declarations made by voters with regard to party membership are concerned, they may be reduced to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the excellent table comparing conditions in 1908 and 1920, in M. McClintock's "Party Affiliation Tests in Direct Primary Election Laws," *American Political Science Review*, vol. xvi, pp. 465-467 (August, 1922). Vermont changed from open to closed primaries in 1921. See L. 1921, No. 9.

<sup>2</sup> C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*, p. 264.

Declara-  
tions of  
voters

two main groups: (1) those relating to past allegiance; and (2) those relating to present affiliation or intent.<sup>1</sup> Under the first of these, for example, a voter at the time of registration some weeks before the primary might enroll himself as a Republican. At the primary itself a watcher of that party, suspecting the voter's affiliations to be otherwise, might challenge his vote. Whereupon the challenged party would be required to take oath that at the preceding general election he had cast his ballot for a majority at least of the candidates of the party with which he had declared himself affiliated. However, party watchers are loath to interfere under these circumstances. In most cases they do not know what the motives of the voter are and are afraid that a challenge at the hands of a watcher of the party he has just embraced may drive him back to the opposition party in the general election.

Effective-  
ness of  
tests

No doubt the test as to earlier affiliation works satisfactorily in the case of persons of nice moral scruples. Unfortunately, not all the voters desiring to participate in closed primaries belong to that category. In any event, perjury in this connection is safe from legal penalties for the simple reason that at the preceding, as at all general, elections the ballot was secret. Manifestly an oath with regard to a voter's present affiliation or future intention is equally valueless for the same reason. It should not be inferred that personal motives are consciously bad in the case of all those who make a change in their enrollment contrary to the kind of vote cast in the preceding general election. The author recalls the action of a college professor of ethics long and openly affiliated with one party, who at the last moment prior to a direct-primary election enrolled with the opposing party. His motive was that the candidates of his own party at the time were all safely dry, whereas on the opposing ticket there was a close and

<sup>1</sup> McClintock, *op. cit.*, notes the following subdivisions and the number of states employing each in 1920 as follows: Voters' declaration as to (a) past allegiance only, 5; (b) present affiliation only, 13; (c) future intention only, 2; combinations of two or more of these, 19.

## NOMINATIONS

bitter struggle between two factions, one wet, the other dry. Being deeply concerned in the success of prohibition, he desired for the time being to vote in the primary of the party where he could further that cause effectually.

A point of considerable practical importance is involved in the designation of the authority which formulates the test of party affiliation. Under earlier direct-primary election laws it was more common to place such powers in the hands of the political party itself. In the Southern states this enabled the dominant party to exclude negroes from its primaries, and hence from any effective political action, since a nomination is virtually equivalent to election in these states. Between 1908 and 1920, however, seven states out of the fourteen having regulations of this character withdrew the power to formulate tests of affiliation from the political party. At present thirty-one states vest it in the legislature, and six others divide it between the legislature and the party.

Authority  
formulating  
party tests

Less objectionable than the various tests noted above would be to a form of declaration that within a prescribed interval the voter had not participated in the primary election of another party.<sup>1</sup> Reinforced by an adequate system of party registration, this would effectually prevent capricious or dishonest changes of party affiliation. But such a solution is open to three important objections:

Another  
kind of  
test

First, it interposes too rigid a barrier to the prompt redistribution of voters among the parties in response to a sudden change in the dominant party issues. Secondly, it tends to prevent a different party affiliation in federal and in local politics in response to differences in the attitudes of parties toward federal and local issues. Thirdly, it tends to encourage an unnatural concentration of voters of divergent political sympathies in the primary of a dominant party. The tendency of the establishment by law of an effective test of party affiliation is, therefore, to perpetuate obsolete party divisions, to confuse distinct party issues, to undermine minority party organizations, to divide majority party organizations, and

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Holcombe, "Direct Primaries and the Second Ballot." *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. v, pp. 535-552 (Nov., 1911).

to give to a minority of voters, namely, the dominant faction within the dominant party, a disproportionate influence upon the result of elections."<sup>1</sup>

Tendency  
of recent  
primary  
legislation

Confronted by this political antinomy, the general tendency of recent legislation is toward the more strictly closed primary, and the placing of increased difficulties in the way of a voter who wishes to change his party affiliation. In practice, however, no direct primary is absolutely closed. All that can be said is that change of party affiliation is much more difficult in some cases than in others. Apart from the South the states fall into two groups on this point. First, those which are more populous and urban, chiefly Eastern, which maintain fairly stringent party tests by law or tradition. Secondly, those less populous and urban, chiefly Western, North-central or mountainous states, where party ties sit more loosely and where by law or by practice primaries tend to become open. In states of the last-named group a marked disintegration of parties is taking place and groups such as the Nonpartisan League are able at times to play a dominant rôle.<sup>2</sup>

Nonparti-  
san pri-  
maries

Nearly all the states having the direct-primary election system provide that nomination for certain kinds of offices shall be made by a nonpartisan primary. This is held at the same time as the party primary. It differs from the latter, however, in that the ballots used contain no party designation whatever. The candidates whose names appear on nonpartisan primary ballots are nominated by petition as in the case of candidates on the party primary bal-

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Holcombe, *op. cit.* The undermining of minority party organizations is particularly evident in a state like Pennsylvania. Thus in the writer's borough with a Republican enrollment of 831 and a Democratic enrollment of 113, the average vote for Democratic candidates in a recent election was 234. This would indicate that slightly more than half of the Democratic party's strength locally is enrolled and takes part in the primaries of the majority party.

<sup>2</sup> For a thorough survey on this and other points, see R. S. Boots, "The Trend of the Direct Primary," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xvi, pp. 412-431 (Aug., 1922). A similar survey covering an earlier period is presented by P. O. Ray, "Recent Primary and Election Laws," *ibid.*, vol. xiii, pp. 264-274 (May, 1919).



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lots, except that such petitions may contain no reference to the party affiliation of the candidate and may be signed by qualified voters regardless of the party affiliation of the latter. Also at the primary election itself qualified voters may receive and vote nonpartisan ballots regardless of whether or not they have met the tests prescribed for participation in a party primary.

The purpose of the nonpartisan primary is, of course, to reduce partisanship to a minimum in the making of nominations to certain offices which because of their nature it is felt should be kept free from this influence. In municipalities the tendency has been strongly in favor of this form of nomination. Judicial and school offices are also commonly placed on a nonpartisan primary ballot. In Minnesota it is even used in connection with members of the legislature. The names of the two candidates receiving the highest votes in such primaries are placed on a nonpartisan ballot, also, as its name implies, without party designation of any kind, for the general election. The success of this device depends upon the degree of independence and intelligence of the communities in which it is employed. Unquestionably the nonpartisan ballot, whether used in primaries or general elections, makes a stronger demand upon the intelligence of voters than the partisan ballot. As a matter of fact, groups form behind the so-called nonpartisan candidates both in the primary and general elections, which are parties in all but name. In those states or cities where the organization is strongly entrenched, it is usually able to pass the word to a sufficient number of its henchmen to secure the nomination and election of those candidates who have been placed upon the nonpartisan ballot at its bidding.

One of the arguments urged most strongly in favor of the direct-primary election system was that under it aspirants for nomination would be more numerous than under the convention system.<sup>1</sup> Too often under the latter it was

Workings  
of the non-  
partisan  
primary

Greater  
number of  
candidates  
under  
direct  
primary

<sup>1</sup> On the actual workings of the direct primary in various states, see C. Kettleborough on Indiana, *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. x, p. 166 (1921); F. E.

perfectly well known that only those persons who had secured in advance the approval of the boss had any chance to get a place on the ticket. On the whole this argument in favor of the direct primary has justified itself in practice. At times there is a plethora of candidates. Thus in 1921 a Philadelphia primary ballot contained the names of 218 contestants for eleven nominations to the office of magistrate. In general there is seldom any dearth of candidates for desirable offices on the primary ballots of parties which have a fair chance of success in the general election. At the Illinois primary of 1916 there were from one to eighteen candidates for each office on the Democratic ticket, and from two to seventeen on the Republican ticket. Ordinarily, however, the average number of candidates for each nomination does not exceed two or three. On the tickets of minority parties there will frequently be no contests, only one name being presented for each nomination. This condition is largely responsible for the tendency noted above, on the part of members of minority parties to enroll and take part in the primaries of the dominant party.

Blanks in  
minority  
party  
ballots

Not infrequently the primary ballots of the Prohibition, Socialist, and other smaller minority parties are left blank so far as names of candidates are concerned, except for a few prominent state-wide offices. In such cases enrolled voters of these parties may write in the names of candidates under the titles of the various offices. If only one name is written in under such circumstances, it goes on the ballot for the general election as the official candidate of the party for that office. Of course under these circumstances candidates belonging to the majority parties frequently try to capture the nomination of a minority party in addition to that of their own. Thus it may happen that a notoriously wet Democrat secures a place on the Prohibition ticket. See Horack, *Primary Elections in Iowa*; Millspaugh, *Party Organization and Machinery in Michigan*; N. H. Debel, *Direct Primary in Nebraska*; R. S. Boots, New Jersey, in his *Direct Primaries*; and H. Feldman, *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xi, p. 494 (1917). For other references see Book Notes at the end of this chapter.

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tion ticket or a notoriously capitalistic Republican on the Socialist ticket.

With more than two aspirants in a primary it must frequently happen under the generally accepted plurality rule, that the nomination is carried off by a candidate who has behind him less than a majority of the votes of his party. To remedy this condition various devices have been employed. In a few states the preferential system of voting is employed.<sup>1</sup> Under this system, as will be explained later,<sup>2</sup> voters may express a second or third, as well as a first, choice. If no candidate receives a majority of first choices, the second and third choices are considered in reaching a decision. Iowa employs a plan whereby if no candidate receives more than 35 per cent of the total vote of his party the result of the primary is deemed inconclusive, and nominations are made by the state convention. A few other states once had similar percentage plans, but have abandoned them for an ordinary plurality requirement. "Experience shows that where there is a sharp division upon a question of principle the number of candidates will be small and the contest is likely to resolve itself into a struggle between two of them. But if the battle is a personal contest between individuals with no particular principles at issue, there is no great harm done by allowing the one receiving the highest vote to take the nomination."<sup>3</sup> However, the most widely accepted device of this kind is the double primary which has been adopted either by party rule or by law in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.<sup>4</sup> In these states there is a first or "free-for-all" primary—open, that is, to all aspirants who have secured the required number of signatures to their petitions.

Devices to  
prevent  
minority  
nominations

<sup>1</sup> For legal texts, see Ala., L. 1915, No. 78; Idaho, L. 1909, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 443-445 following; also account of the Indiana primary law, *American Year Book*, 1915, p. 86, and of the Wisconsin law, *ibid.*, 1912, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*, p. 268.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of laws on this point, see Mississippi L. 1914, chap. 149; Texas L. 1918, 4th C. S., chap. 90, sec. 1.

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This is decisive in the case of nominations to offices if any aspirant receives a clear majority vote. In the case of other offices there is a second, or "run-off," primary to decide between the two candidates who received the highest votes in the free-for-all ballot. Of course this plan involves a great deal of extra trouble and expense, but it does place a majority vote behind the party nominees. In the states where it is employed this is a matter of more than usual importance inasmuch as nomination by the Democratic party is virtually equivalent to election.

Anti "sore-head" laws

Taking advantage of provisions for the formation of new parties or for running as independents, candidates who have been defeated in the primary of their own party sometimes secure a place on the ballot for the ensuing general election. Naturally they are denounced as "sore-heads" by their successful rivals and former party associates. In a few states the direct-primary election laws have recently been amended to prohibit such candidacies. Thus Kentucky makes any candidate defeated in the primary ineligible for the same office during the same year; Maryland, Oregon, and California forbid a candidate of this kind to become the candidate of any party or to run as an independent; and Indiana has provided that the name of an independent candidate may not be printed on the general election ballot unless he shall have filed his declaration thirty days before the primary.<sup>1</sup>

Type of candidates under direct primary

Another argument frequently urged in favor of direct, primary elections is that they bring out a better class of candidates and consequently a higher type of public officials. That they have increased the number of aspirants there can be no doubt, but among these are always some who are without organized support and hence are not really in the running. Under the old convention system men of high type were sometimes designated by the machine without the necessity of any effort on their part. However, this seldom happened unless the machine antici-

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Boots, *op. cit.*, Ky. L. 1920, chap. 156; Md. L. 1922, chap. 399; Ore. L. 1921, chap. 420; Cal. L. 1921, chap. 710; Ind. L. 1921, chap. 198.

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pated a sound drubbing at the hands of the voters because of its recent misdeeds. It is argued that men of this type, particularly those whose eminence has been gained in other fields than politics, will not thrust themselves forward and make the fight necessary to gain a nomination at a primary election. Opinions differ greatly with regard to this point. Secretary Charles E. Hughes takes it very seriously, but Professor Merriam regards it as "a pleasant fiction without much basis in the actual facts of political life."<sup>1</sup>

In the absence of accepted standards of measurement to determine political ability and virtue it is, of course, impossible to prove that the direct-primary election system has produced candidates of superior type. Certainly it debars no politician capable of cutting a figure in the old time caucus or convention. And "it gives great advantage to the smooth man who is willing to spend money in making himself known, or to the aspirant who keeps himself much in the public eye, regardless of the way in which he gets himself there."<sup>2</sup> It must, however, be conceded that, given a popular revolt against the machine of sufficient magnitude, it is possible to break the slate of the latter in the primary election even when it is so completely in control of the party machinery that under the old convention system it could dictate every nomination on the ticket. Such events happen only occasionally, as in the 1922 primaries of Indiana when Beveridge was nominated for the Senate, and of Pennsylvania in the same year, when Pinchot was nominated for Governor. However, the possibility of such untoward events induces a certain moderation on the part of political bosses that is doubtless salutary. On the whole this seems to be the greatest single advantage that can be claimed for direct-primary elections after twenty years' experience with them. Of course if the electorate is quiescent, party organizations find it easily pos-

Occasional  
primary  
victories  
over the  
machine

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pamphlet on *The Direct Primary*, published by the National Municipal League, 1921, pp. 5, 14.

<sup>2</sup> W. B. Munro, *Government of American Cities*, p. 134.



sible to secure the nomination of their slates under the direct-primary election system.

The boss  
and the  
direct  
primary

In one particular party bosses are said to find a certain satisfaction in direct-primary elections. Under the old convention system, prospective candidates knew that their chance of success depended almost entirely upon the word of the boss. If that word was not forthcoming they made as much trouble for him as they could. Under the direct-primary election system many candidates still eagerly seek the approval of the boss. He may tell those to whom he is in reality opposed that he has nothing to do with nominations, that everything is in the hands of the people under the direct-primary election system, and that, of course, if they wish to try it they have the same right to do so as anybody else. Nevertheless, he may use his influence quietly and often successfully for his friends in the primary. If afterward there is any recrimination from disgruntled aspirants the boss tells them not to blame him, but rather the people who are responsible for their defeat.

Vote in  
direct  
primaries

Direct-primary elections are sufficiently simple and open in their methods to encourage active participation by the rank and file of party members. Undoubtedly they bring out a vote heavier by far than was ever registered under the old popular caucus system. Even in dull primaries from 25 to 55 per cent of the party vote is polled. In hot fights the participation runs from 55 to 85 per cent.<sup>1</sup> Of course objection is made to direct-primary elections on the ground that only a minority may nominate even under the most favorable circumstances. Thus with 85 per cent participation and only two aspirants, the successful one needs only 43 per cent of the party enrollment to win. However, few, if any, nominations were made under the old convention system that could claim to have been supported by anything approaching this percentage of party strength. Further it should be remembered that a considerable element in all parties is indifferent. Voters of this kind pre-

<sup>1</sup> P. O. Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 148; C. E. Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

## NOMINATIONS

fer to let others make nominations, reserving to themselves the right to reject any or all candidates of the party in the general election. It must be remembered also that under the direct-primary system every vote counts directly for every office on the ballot from governor to tax assessor, whereas in the old popular caucus it counted directly only for a handful of local offices and indirectly through the hierarchy of delegate conventions for offices of greater importance. The direct-primary election system applies the same method to all nominations made under it, and in this respect it is simpler than the convention system. Finally, under the old convention system an unavowed or "dark horse" candidate might be groomed quietly in such a way as to carry off the nomination at the eleventh hour. Under the direct-primary this time-worn trick of political jockeyism is impossible.

On the other hand, the direct-primary election system suffers from certain obvious defects. Where it is so complete that all conventions are abolished, no party authority remains which is capable of drafting platforms. Under the Richards law in South Dakota (L. 1917, ch. 234) an attempt was made to formulate paramount issues in national, state, and county affairs, summarizing each of them in eight words upon the ballot used in primary elections, but this portion of the law was repealed in 1921 (L. 1921, chs. 329, 331). If conventions are provided for, it may happen that they are dominated by a faction hostile to the candidates nominated in the direct-primary elections. Of course, in such cases the candidates may formulate and at times have formulated and proclaimed their own platforms, but the situation is an awkward one, nevertheless. Also under the direct-primary election system it may happen that a majority of the party offices are secured by members of a faction hostile to candidates. As a result the latter must either accept support of party officials whom they distrust or improvise a campaign organization of their own. It has been suggested that this difficulty might be removed by permitting candidates to appoint

Defects of  
the direct  
primary

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their own campaign managers. Doubtless this would work as well as it does in national elections, if the candidates agreed among themselves, but under the direct-primary election system it is easily possible that the candidates may represent bitterly opposed factions. Of course similar cases of internal strife occurred under the old convention system, but they were less likely because the faction which dominated the convention not only nominated the candidates, but also wrote the platform and chose the party officials who were to manage the campaign.

"Balanced"  
tickets

Party conventions also resulted in the nomination of a well-balanced ticket—that is, one with candidates representing the various geographical sections of the district and all the more important industrial, racial, and religious elements of the party. Unworthy bargains may have been consummated in connection with such arrangements, but on the other hand, considerations of ability, party service, and party welfare must have been taken into account. The point is that the direct-primary election system provides no facilities for producing a balanced ticket. Indeed, it may result in the success of a single narrow faction and the nomination of a ticket leaving large sections of the district and important elements in the electorate out of consideration. Of course, since all parties operate under the same primary election law, each of them is equally exposed to this danger. Opponents of direct-primaries originally made a great deal of the argument that they would unduly favor the mass vote of cities as against the widely scattered rural vote, but as a rule this has not been the case.

Social fea-  
tures of the  
old con-  
vention

In many ways the old convention system worked for party integration and harmony. It provided for periodical meetings between leaders and active party workers from all parts of the county, district, state, or nation. No doubt leaders and delegates alike at such meetings were more interested in projects for the division of the loaves and fishes than in the higher issues of statecraft, but at least they met one another face to face and formed per-

## NOMINATIONS

sonal relationships of esteem and co-operation. Even to-day it is impossible to talk to a politician of the old school without noting the vivid and pleasant, one might almost say sentimental, memories he retains of his convention experiences. Of course some conventions were stormy affairs, making it necessary for the members of the dominant faction to throw out, in the literal sense of the word, their opponents. In general, surprisingly little permanent resentment resulted from these struggles. A year later former antagonists might be working shoulder to shoulder, or the dominant faction of the previous fight, now in a minority, might find itself thrown out in its turn. And no matter which side won there was a clear-cut decision.

The argument which is used with the greatest force and effectiveness against the direct-primary election system is the heavy burden which it imposes upon both the public purse and the private purses of candidates. The state is forced to pay for extra registration in advance of the primary, for the printing of primary ballots, the rent of polling places, and the salaries of election officials. And the successful candidate is obliged to fight two campaigns, one for nomination, the other for election. In the first of these he stands not as the representative of the party, but as a personal aspirant. If he wins at the primary he may expect some support out of the party funds for his final campaign. But it is manifestly improper to use party funds to advance the interests of any candidate in the primary, and in some states it is specifically forbidden by law.<sup>1</sup>

Of course a candidate may form a personal campaign committee and receive financial help from it. In general, however, the tendency is to look to the candidate for a large part of the money needed for his primary campaign. The laws of several states, chiefly in the South where direct-primary elections are conducted under party control, empower the party authorities to collect fees from candidates sufficient in amount to pay some portion at least of the cost of the primary. Thus in Alabama party authori-

Heavy  
burdens  
imposed by  
the direct  
primary

Cost of  
primary to  
candidates

<sup>1</sup> Cf. N. Y. L. 1911, chap. 891; 1913, chap. 820.

ties may make assessments upon candidates not to exceed 4 per cent of the first year's salary of the office sought, nor more than \$35 in the case of fee offices. In Nevada fees varying from \$12.50 for candidates for the legislature to \$100 for United States Senator may be collected. This relieves the state treasury, of course, but it does so by transferring the burden to the candidates. However, the trend of primary legislation is toward the payment of all common costs out of public funds.

**Advantages  
to candi-  
dates with  
large cam-  
paign funds**

In small towns and districts the financial burden imposed upon candidates under the direct-primary election system is not great enough to deter many from entering the primary. But in larger cities or states one may expect to make little headway unless he is able either to contribute large sums from his private funds, or can count upon contributions considerable in the aggregate from persons or interests friendly to his candidacy. If permitted under the law the first of these alternatives is objectionable because it means that millionaires with political ambition enjoy an enormous advantage under the direct-primary election system. Some of the most noisome political scandals of recent date are cases in point. And the second alternative is objectionable because it may mean that the poor man obtains his success in the primary only by tacitly mortgaging his future official conduct to the interests which have financed his campaign. Of course candidates under the old convention system were often compelled to contribute or raise considerable sums to secure nomination, although the absence of publicity laws at the time leaves us without definite figures as to amounts thus exacted. No doubt the money was sometimes used to bribe delegates. One of the arguments in favor of the direct-primary election system was that while you could buy a nomination from a convention you could not buy it from the whole electorate of the state. Nevertheless, large-scale corruption has been employed to obtain nominations within the gift of the people.

Further, the direct-primary election system unquestionably opens the way to the expenditure of much larger



## NOMINATIONS

sums than were needed under the delegate-convention system for pre-primary campaigns of education, or rather of advertisement, and for other purposes not in themselves corrupt. Finally, it necessitates a much larger amount of effort on the part of political workers and leaders, and to that extent makes such services even more essential than they were before. The enormous extent and detail of corrupt practices acts applying to direct-primary elections give testimony eloquent as to the difficulty of this problem.

Pre-primary campaigns of advertisement

During the last few years attacks have been made upon direct-primary elections in a large number of states. Enemies of the system ascribe this hostile movement to the defects which it has shown in practice. Its friends assert that the movement is a conspiracy of disgruntled machine politicians seeking to recover the power they possessed under the old convention system. Some encouragement was given to the attacks upon direct primaries by the administration at Washington, and the movement occurred in so many sections of the country and on a sufficient scale to be described as nation wide. Nor has it been wholly without results, for conventions have been restored to a large degree in New York and Idaho.<sup>1</sup>

Recent attacks upon the direct primary

As a whole, however, the direct-primary has weathered the storm.<sup>2</sup> Between 1919 and 1922 bills to repeal the direct-primary law were introduced on one or more occasions in eight states, but all failed with the exceptions noted above. Bills designed to restore the convention specifically

Direct primary weathers the storm

<sup>1</sup> New York L. 1921, chap. 479; L. 1919, chap. 107. In New York, writes R. S. Boots, *op. cit.*, "conventions have been restored for the nomination of candidates, other than presidential electors (nominated by the state committees), to be voted for by all the voters of a state, and for justice of the supreme court (elected in nine districts, not the highest court of the state). Delegates-at-large to national conventions are hereafter to be elected at state conventions; national district delegates and delegates to the state and judicial district conventions are to be elected at official primaries. . . . Idaho has substituted state convention for primary for the nomination of congressional and state candidates." In Idaho, however, a movement is now on foot backed by Democrats and Independents to return to direct primaries.

<sup>2</sup> R. S. Boots, "The Direct Primary Weathers the Storm," *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. x, pp. 322-324 (June, 1921).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

for minor state offices were also introduced in ten states, and none was successful. In Montana an act of 1919 to restore conventions for the nomination of certain officers was referred to popular vote by the legislature and defeated by 77,549 to 60,483.<sup>1</sup> And in Nebraska an act of the same general character was beaten by a referendum vote of 133,115 to 49,410.<sup>2</sup>

Repeal  
of direct-  
primary  
laws un-  
likely

On the whole, there is little immediate likelihood of the sweeping repeal of direct-primary election laws. In spite of the heavy burdens and manifest defects of this method of making nominations, it retains the support of a large part of the people as a serviceable means of beating the machine at least occasionally. Presidential preference primaries, which will be discussed later, have shown themselves so ineffective, however, that abandonment may occur in that field. But there is not the slightest prospect of a return to the old and thoroughly discredited system of unregulated popular caucuses and conventions. Even if other states should follow the lead of New York and Idaho in restoring conventions for more important offices, they will, as these two states did, surround the processes of conventions with many legal safeguards designed to insure fairness and openness, and further, they will provide for the election of delegates to such conventions in direct-primary elections also regulated by law so as to prevent the abuses of the old popular caucus.

Improve-  
ment of the  
direct  
primary

If the direct-primary system is to remain for the present, as seems likely, what means may be taken to improve its operation? Since in so many particulars primary elections resemble general elections, it is obvious that reforms which would work well in connection with the latter should prove applicable also to the former. Pre-eminent among such reforms is the short ballot, which "is indispensable to

<sup>1</sup> This was 77 per cent of the presidential vote of the state cast on the same day (Nov. 2, 1920). By a closer vote (66,131 for to 74,079 against) the electorate also defeated an act repealing the presidential-preference primary.

<sup>2</sup> This amounted to 38 per cent of the presidential vote cast the same day (Nov. 2, 1920).

## NOMINATIONS

any satisfactory system of party nominations." <sup>1</sup> Reforms in other political fields, as, for example, the merit system, should have a beneficent reaction upon both general and primary elections. Also it is evident that many states, especially those which enacted direct-primary laws several years ago might do well to revise them in the light of the experience gained by more progressive states. We are, however, sadly in need of an adequate scholarly survey of that experience. Such a survey would be a task of colossal magnitude which could be performed successfully only by co-operative effort.

One proposal for reform has been brought forward repeatedly by theorists, practical politicians, and officials—that of a pre-primary recommending convention.<sup>2</sup> This would permit party committeemen regularly chosen at the preceding election to make designations from the list of those who had filed nominating positions—in other words, to put a regular ticket in the field prior to the date of the primary election. If the party rank and file accepted this ticket, no election need be held, thus saving a great deal of expense and trouble. If opposition developed, independent designations could be made, and a decision reached in the ordinary way at the primary election. It is unlikely that such contests would be numerous. As a result the primary ballot could be greatly shortened—a consummation devoutly to be wished. On the other hand, independent candidates who forced a decision at the primary would no doubt be denounced by the regulars as party rebels. According to a recent writer, the pre-primary conference plan seems to possess other advantages, as follows:

Pre-primary  
recommending  
conventions

It would permit effective party conference; it would secure the choice of committeemen by, and their responsibility to, the full party vote; it would regularize what is now the practice of an

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Merriam, "Recent Tendencies in Primary Election Systems," *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. x, pp. 87-94 (Feb., 1921).

<sup>2</sup> Recommended by Charles E. Hughes when governor of New York, see P. O. Ray, *op cit.*, p. 144. For a recent restatement of his views, see article on "The Fate of the Direct Primary," *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. x, pp. 23-31 (Jan., 1921).

irresponsible organization in many states, and permit a drafting of candidates in the states where now everything is left to the self-advertisers; it would not lessen the opportunity which the primary now affords, of combating objectionable candidacies and reducing the organization to submission.<sup>1</sup>

New York  
and Colo-  
rado plans

While much can be said in favor of the above plan, the New York law of 1911, since repealed, went too far in its provisions for pre-primary meetings and designations. It gave candidates selected by regular party committees a preferential place on the primary ballot and authorized them to use the party emblem, thus favoring unduly the organization and opening the way to straight-ticket voting. A more promising plan was introduced in Colorado, where representative party assemblies are held and all aspirants receiving 10 per cent of the vote thereof become official party candidates in the primary.

Nomina-  
tions by  
petition

Unquestionably, however, there is a growing conviction among authorities on the subject that attempts to reform the direct-primary election system will result chiefly in adding to its burdens and complexity. Various suggestions have been made looking to the substitution for it of something simpler, less costly, and more effective. Among these suggestions, nomination by petition has been widely discussed. This plan takes two forms, according to the number of signatures required for a place on the ballot used in the general election. The first aims to prevent a multitude of candidates by the requirement of a large number of signers. Thus in Boston any voter may appear upon the municipal ballot as a candidate for mayor by filing nomination papers with 5,000 signatures, and as candidate for the city council or the school committees by filing nomination papers with 2,500 signatures. This plan does not restrict the race to the two strongest candidates. It gives a chance to every large group in the city to make its nominations. But it has not put an end to the preliminary caucus and it suffers from all the abuses and waste of effort

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Boots, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

## NOMINATIONS

apparently inherent in the collection of large numbers of signatures.

The second form of nomination by petition, sometimes referred to as the free-nomination system, proposes to throw open the ballot for use in the general election to all persons whose names are proposed by a very small number of electors. This system has produced excellent results in England and in several of her self-governing colonies. For parliamentary candidacy all that is now required is a nomination petition in writing signed by a proposer, seconder, and eight others, all registered voters. Moreover, if only one candidate is proposed for a seat, he is forthwith declared elected. In general parliamentary elections from one fourth to one third of the candidates and in municipal and county council elections even larger proportions are thus returned unopposed.

Free-nomination system

There are numerous reasons for the dearth of candidates in England. Parliamentary candidates are obliged to deposit in advance a sum of money which may amount to from five hundred to a thousand pounds to pay the expenses of the election. If in the subsequent poll a candidate receives one eighth of the votes, his money is returned to him; if not, he loses it forever. Elective office holders are paid very low salaries or none at all. There is no patronage to distribute. There is no hierarchy of offices, local, county, state, and national, as in the United States, to encourage candidates eager for future advancement. Other traditional and social reasons peculiar to England discourage political ambition in large classes of the people.<sup>1</sup>

Effects of the system in England

In the United States most of these limitations do not exist. The English system has the advantage of being very simple and it is inexpensive except to candidates. On the other hand, it restricts political aspiration in a narrow and undemocratic way. In the United States the ambition to hold public office is widespread. On the whole it is well

Probable effects in the United States

<sup>1</sup> For an admirable discussion of this topic, see A. L. Lowell, *Governments of England*, vol. ii, pp. 46-56.



that this is the case, in spite of the fact that at times thoroughly unfit men manage to get themselves nominated and elected. Also Americans seem to be more willing to stand up and take a political beating, although, of course, there are many more ways of deriving advantage even from defeat in this country than in England. Apart from the motives influencing candidacies in the two countries, however, it is undeniable that the comparatively large number of signatures required under our existing primary-election laws does not prevent an excess of candidates in many instances. If we were to reduce our requirement to the English standard of ten names only, and, further, if we were to eliminate the necessity of fighting for a decision in a primary election, it seems probable that we would be overwhelmed with candidates, at least for all desirable offices. Our ballots, already too long for discriminating voting, would become unmanageable.

Other  
possible  
solutions

Nomination by petition, whether with a large or a small number of signatures, therefore, offers no ideal solution to the problem proposed by direct-primary elections. There remains, however, one further possibility. With few or comparatively few nominations, the primary election might be eliminated and decision made in a final election held under the preferential voting system, or, better still, under the single transferable vote system of proportional representation. These voting systems will be explained later. Suffice it to say here that both of them provide methods whereby if no candidate receives a majority of the voters' first choices, which, of course, would elect him in any event, the second or third choices of voters are canvassed until a decision is reached presumably representing the major choice of the electorate. The single transferable vote system of proportional representation arranges for the ascertainment of the will of the voters with a nicety which seems to cover every shade of preference which could be brought out in two elections, one primary, the other general. By doing so it saves an enormous amount of trouble and expense. If the experiments

## NOMINATIONS

now being made along this line in a number of cities should prove successful, we may be able to substitute for the direct-primary election system not something "just as good," but something better, simpler, and cheaper. Meanwhile it is well to remember that if once in a dozen years the direct-primary prevents the capture of a city or a state by the machine, the resultant money saving alone, leaving moral values wholly out of the reckoning, may amount to much more than the cost of primaries during the whole period.

## BOOK NOTES

OWING to the central importance among party functions of the nominating process all the general works cited under Ch. I devote more or less space to the subject. Excellent accounts of earlier methods will be found in F. W. Dallinger, *Nominations for Elective Office* (1897). E. C. Meyer, *Nominating System: Direct Primaries versus Conventions* (1902), is particularly helpful for its accounts of convention abuses. Although in the form of fiction no one has presented more vivid and accurate descriptions of old-time political conventions than Brand Whitlock in *The 13th District* (1902), and in his "Reform in the First," one of the collection of short stories included in *The Gold Brick* (1910).

Much of the literature on direct primaries is to be found in pamphlets or articles which have been largely cited in footnotes. C. E. Merriam, *Primary Elections* (1908), the first systematic treatment of the subject, is of particular importance on the earlier phases of the movement.

\* *The Direct Primary*, issued as no. 195, vol. 106 of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (March, 1923), is the most valuable recent compendium, containing a number of general articles presenting the pros and cons of the subject, also special articles on *Reform of Presidential Nominating Methods*, P. O. Ray; *Party Platforms in State Politics*, R. S. Boots; *Non-partisan Nominations and Elections*, R. E. Cushman;

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*Pre-Primary Conventions*, S. T. Wallace; and *Prevention of Minority Nominations*, B. H. Williams. Operations of the direct primary in particular states are discussed as follows: *California*, V. J. West; *Maine*, O. C. Hornell; *New York*, L. Overacker; *Iowa*, F. E. Horack; *South Dakota*, C. A. Bergdahl; *Wisconsin*, A. B. Hall; and *Indiana*, F. H. Guild. Part IV contains a digest of primary election laws by C. Kettleborough.

Briefer discussions of nominating methods may also be found in A. N. Holcombe, *State Government*, Ch. VII (1916), and W. B. Munro, *Government of American Cities*, Ch. VI (3d ed., 1920).

## CHAPTER XI

### NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

As originally adopted, the Constitution of the United States devoted less than one hundred words to the method of choosing a President. It was the sincere hope of the Fathers that parties would play no part in the process thus briefly formulated, but rather that men of high standing and wide vision would be appointed presidential electors and left free to select from among the country's greatest statesmen the one best fitted to be chief magistrate. Within ten years this hope proved a delusion. Presidential electors came to be bound rigidly by party ties, and in 1804 the Twelfth Amendment was made necessary in large part by this unforeseen development.

Constitution on choice of a President

Even with the addition of the amendment the Constitution tells us comparatively little of the actual process of President making. It does provide for three steps: (1) the choice of electors; (2) the voting by electors; and (3) the counting of the votes. Of these, however, the second and third have become mere formalities, while the first is preceded and determined by an enormous amount of party effort culminating in the national conventions and continued at white heat throughout the subsequent campaign. And until quite recently the structures and forces engaged in this work were outside the purview of the constitution and the laws, having been developed solely under party rules and traditions.

Three steps provided

The first formal steps preliminary to the national conventions of the two great parties are taken at meetings of their respective national committees in January of a presidential year or in December of the preceding year. Usually the sessions of these committees are held in Wash-

Steps preliminary to national conventions

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

ington to meet the convenience of members holding congressional or other federal offices. The principal matters of business coming before the meetings are (1) fixing the date for opening the national convention; and (2) choosing the city in which it is to be held. Also each committee issues a more or less formal call for the convention signed by its chairman and secretary.

Convention  
dates

For the last thirty years the Republicans have fixed dates falling between June 7th and 21st of the presidential year for the opening of their convention, the Democrats following with dates from one to three weeks later. In 1888 the Democratic convention was held two weeks earlier than the Republican. With this exception the Republican convention has preceded the Democratic in every campaign year from 1864 to 1920, inclusive. The course pursued by the former is bolder and gives them the somewhat dubious advantage of a longer campaign period. By their more cautious policy the Democrats stand to profit from any errors or omissions occurring in the convention of their adversaries.

Choice of  
convention  
city

Before deciding upon the place for holding the convention the National Committee gives a hearing to delegations of prominent politicians and business men coming from all the cities which desire that honor. Spokesmen chosen by each of these delegations recite in glowing terms the advantages of their respective cities. Immunity from the heat common to other American cities in June and July was promised by one orator for the very good reason, as he averred, that "we do not keep that kind of weather." Members of the committee are, of course, not moved by such elocutionary effervescence. They are intent upon the solid advantages offered by large cities located as near the center of population as possible, and possessing adequate hotel accommodations, excellent railway connections with all sections of the country, and an auditorium colossal enough to seat delegates, alternates, and the vast crowds which flock to the sessions of the convention. It is desirable also that the city should possess a number of daily



## NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

papers of metropolitan circulation, some of which should be favorably inclined to the party holding the convention. Political influence upon a doubtful section or pivotal state may be considered. Finally, but by no means least in importance, is the size of the financial guaranty toward the expenses of the convention or the party funds offered by each of the competing cities. "Money talks," it is said, and sums in excess of \$100,000 have been pledged for such purposes, mainly from business men who expect to reap a profit from convention crowds.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the Civil War Baltimore was the favorite national convention city. But with the western movement of population Chicago has distanced all competitors. From 1864 to 1920, inclusive, thirteen conventions, nine Republican and four Democratic, have been held in that city. St. Louis ranks second with one Republican and four Democratic conventions, and Baltimore third with one Republican and two Democratic conventions during the same period. Other convention cities since 1864 are as follows: Philadelphia, two Republican conventions; Cincinnati, one Republican, one Democratic; New York and Minneapolis, one Republican each; Kansas City, Denver, and San Francisco, one Democratic each. The most surprising choice of recent years was that of San Francisco by the Democrats in 1920.

Cities chosen since 1864

Included in the call for the convention issued by the Democratic National Committee is a statement of the number of delegates to which each state and territory is entitled. The Republican call goes into somewhat greater detail, prescribing in general terms the process by which and the period of time within which delegates are to be chosen, the forwarding of their credentials to the secretary of the National Committee, and outlining the procedure in the case of contesting delegations.

Call for the convention

<sup>1</sup> For an actual discussion of these points by the Democratic National Committee, Jan. 8, 1920, resulting in the choice of San Francisco, see *Official Report of the Democratic National Convention, 1920*, appendix, pp. 548-566.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Apportionment of delegates

In state and minor conventions, as has already been noted, delegates were apportioned among the districts according to the strength of the party vote in each. Until a quite recent date, on the other hand, apportionment of delegates to national conventions has been based upon the size of the total representation of each state in Congress. Prior to 1852 the number of delegates to national conventions from each state was usually equal to the number of its Senators and Representatives. From 1852 to the present time in the case of the Democratic party, and from 1860 to 1916 in that of the Republican, the number of delegates has been twice that of the total congressional representation of each state. From 1852 to 1872 each delegate in Democratic conventions had one half vote. Since 1872 in Democratic conventions and since 1860 in Republican conventions each delegate has had one vote. As an occasional exception half votes are still recorded in the national conventions of the two great parties. Usually this is due to the fact that contesting delegations coming from a few states are both seated, each member of such delegations being given one half vote. In addition to the delegates from the states there were in the Democratic national convention of 1920 two delegates from the Canal Zone and six delegates from each of the following: Alaska, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Philippines, and Porto Rico. The present rule of the Republican party with regard to delegates from the District of Columbia and outlying possessions will be found below.

Disproportionate representation of the South in Republican conventions

If party strength were distributed equally throughout the country this rule would have worked satisfactorily. But such was far from being the case, particularly with the Republican party. For example, in the 1912 convention of that party, Georgia, which had cast only 41,692 Republican votes in the preceding presidential election, was entitled to twenty-eight delegates, whereas Iowa with 275,210 Republican votes in 1908, was entitled to only twenty-six delegates. Similarly, four other Southern states—Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South

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Carolina—with a total Republican vote of 42,592, had eighty-two delegates, while Pennsylvania with a Republican vote of 745,779 had only seventy-six.

This monstrous disproportion was made all the more glaring by the fact that the states favored under it were almost never found in the Republican column when the electoral vote was counted. And the practical danger of the situation was enhanced because of the notorious subservience of Southern Republican delegates to Republican administration influence in Washington or to corruptionists acting in the interests of certain candidates. As early as 1883, the matter came up for discussion before the Republican National Committee. In 1900, Senator Quay of Pennsylvania, whose name is not usually associated with reform projects, offered a well-digested plan for reapportionment.<sup>1</sup> It was opposed on the ground of the seeming importance of maintaining the party organization and encouraging party workers in the Southern states. Nothing was done, with the result that this abuse continued until 1912, when it added greatly to the bitterness of the Republican party split of that year.<sup>2</sup>

Reform  
proposals

In 1913 a tardy measure of reform was introduced, the principal feature of which was the reduction of the number of delegates from two to one in each congressional district in which the Republican vote was less than 7,500. As a result eleven Southern states lost seventy-nine delegates. At a meeting of the Republican National Committee, held June 8, 1921, a further measure of reform was adopted in accordance with which it was estimated that twenty-three additional Southern delegates would have been dropped from the rolls.<sup>3</sup> But on December 12, 1923, before this measure had been tried out the National Committee backwatered, adopting the following

Changes of  
1913, 1921,  
and 1923

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems in the United States*, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> E. Stanwood, *History of the Presidency*, vol. ii, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> F. M. Davenport, "Republican Revulsion against the Rotten Borough," *Outlook*, vol. cxxv, p. 416 (June 30, 1920).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

basis of apportionment which governed the Republican convention of 1924 and is still in effect:

### (a) *Delegates at Large*

1. Four delegates at large from each state.
2. Two additional delegates at large for each representative at large in Congress from any state.
3. Two delegates at large each for Alaska, District of Columbia, Porto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippine Islands.
4. Three additional delegates at large from each state casting its electoral vote, or a majority thereof, for the Republican nominee for President in the last preceding presidential election.

### (b) *District Delegates*

1. One district delegate from each congressional district.
2. One additional district delegate from each congressional district casting 10,000 votes or more for any Republican elector in the last preceding presidential election or for the Republican nominee in the last preceding congressional election.

### (c) *Alternate Delegates*

1. One alternate delegate to each delegate to the national convention.

Result of  
changes

As the net result of these somewhat confusing changes the number of Southern delegates in 1924, while still considerably lower than in 1912, was actually somewhat higher than in 1916 or 1920. Relatively, however, the South is slightly weaker than ever before owing to the clauses in the above rule (a4, b2) favoring states and districts, mostly Northern, of course, which have gone Republican or have cast a fairly heavy Republican vote. In spite of all these changes the fact remains that Republican voters in the South are enormously over-represented

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in the national convention of their party. Thus Texas, which cast only 114,538 votes for Harding, had 23 delegates in 1924, as compared with 27 delegates for Minnesota, which gave Harding 519,421 votes. Finally the clauses referred to above which increased Northern representation are largely responsible for making the Republican convention a more numerous body than the democratic. In 1916 the former had 985 members; in 1920, 984; in 1924 it jumped to 1,109. The whole number of votes represented in the Democratic convention was the same in 1916 and 1920, namely 1,094; in 1924 it was 1,098.

Changes of some importance have also been made during recent years in the method of electing delegates to national conventions. During the first decade of the century, as we have noted, the direct-primary election system was making rapid progress throughout the country. The success attending it was such that efforts to extend it to presidential nominations were inevitable. Here again Oregon was the leader, a project brought forward by the People's Power League of that state being adopted by referendum vote in 1910. In the ensuing five years, twenty-one states followed the example of Oregon.<sup>1</sup> So rapid was the progress of the movement that ten states had enacted laws in time to govern the choice of their delegates to the national convention of 1912. Four years later more than half the delegates were chosen under this plan. Since the presidential campaign of 1916, however, there have been no further efforts to introduce presidential preference primaries. Indeed, a strong reaction has set in and three states have already repealed their laws on the subject.<sup>2</sup>

Choice of  
delegates by  
direct  
primaries

<sup>1</sup> The list with dates is as follows: Oregon, 1910; California, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, 1911; Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, and South Dakota, 1912; Iowa, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, 1913; Indiana, North Carolina, Vermont, and West Virginia, 1915. Permissive laws were enacted also in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. See *Am. Yr. Bk.*, 1919, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> Iowa and Minnesota, 1917; Vermont, 1921.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

### Presidential preference primaries

Presidential preference primary laws fall into three groups. First there are those laws of states like New Hampshire and South Dakota, which make no provision for the people to vote directly on presidential candidates, but which do provide for the choice of delegates to national conventions in direct primary elections of the usual type. Candidates may or may not be pledged on the ballot to support a given candidate for the Presidency at the convention. In Ohio candidates for delegates must express a first and second choice for the Presidency. Second the laws may provide, as in Iowa and Minnesota, for a popular vote on various aspirants for the presidential nomination, without, however, attempting to make the result of this vote binding upon delegates. Third there are the laws of states like Ohio and Pennsylvania, which not only provide for a popular vote on presidential candidates, but also for some means whereby the choice so expressed may be made binding upon delegates.

### Petitions

In their methods, presidential preference primaries present no features differing from ordinary direct primary elections. To place the name of an aspirant for the Presidency on the primary ballot a petition with one thousand signatures is usually required. This is low enough not only to be within the reach of every favorite son, but also of mere cranks. In some states aspirants for the Presidency are relieved from the requirement imposed upon ordinary candidates of filing an affidavit in connection with their nomination papers.

### Defects of presidential primaries

Immediately upon their introduction presidential preference primaries developed numerous defects, some the result of hastily drafted laws, others due to conflict with the national convention and with state conventions where the latter were retained. As in the case of instructed delegates formerly, the question was raised with regard to delegates pledged under the new system as to how long they were obligated to vote in the convention for the candidate to whom they had bound themselves. In 1912, Roosevelt lost the preferential vote of Massachusetts by

## NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

a small margin, but owing to the dispersal of Taft's strength among too many candidates Roosevelt's candidates for delegates at large were elected.<sup>1</sup> During the same campaign the Democratic state convention in Ohio attempted to apply the unit rule to the entire state delegation in favor of Harmon. District delegates who had been chosen on the strength of their pledges to Wilson carried the fight to the floor of the Baltimore convention, and won. California and South Dakota provided for the election of delegates on a general ticket, thus virtually establishing the unit rule for both parties, but the Republican National Convention of 1912 refused to acknowledge the power of a state law as against its own rules.

As the result of these and other difficulties it became apparent that attempts at state regulation in so vast a field were inadequate. National conventions felt free to refuse to be bound by them. Only by uniform national regulation could the problem be solved. And regulation of this character would have to meet not only the opposition of the states' rights element, but also the innumerable difficulties due to local and sectional differences. The plan much discussed at this time for the abolition of national conventions and nomination of presidential candidates by a nation-wide direct primary is large enough to stagger the imagination. One detail of it alone presents very great, if not insuperable, difficulties, namely the provision of a uniform rule for determining affiliation with a national party as distinct from existing state tests of affiliation with parties.<sup>2</sup>

Abolition  
of national  
conventions

In his annual message of December 2, 1913, President Wilson urged "the prompt enactment of legislation which

<sup>1</sup> For Roosevelt's attitude on this situation, see W. D. Lewis, *Life of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> For more detailed criticisms of the presidential preference primaries, see A. N. Holcombe in *Am. Yr. Bk.*, 1912, p. 63; P. O. Ray, "Reform of Presidential Nominating Methods," *Annals American Academy*, vol. cvi, pp. 63-71 (March, 1923); F. M. Davenport, "Failure of the Presidential Primary," *Outlook*, vol. cxii, p. 807 (1916); and F. W. Dickey, "Presidential Preference Primary," *American Political Science Review*, vol. ix, pp. 467-487 (1915).

Reform  
suggested  
by Presi-  
dent Wilson

will provide for primary elections throughout the country at which the voters of the several parties may choose their nominees for the Presidency without the intervention of nominating conventions." He favored the retention of conventions, "but only for the purpose of declaring and accepting the verdict of the primaries and formulating the platform of the parties." A further striking innovation was suggested to the effect that "these conventions should consist not of delegates chosen for this single purpose, but of the nominees for Congress, the nominees for vacant seats in the Senate of the United States, the Senators whose terms have not yet closed, the national committees, and the candidates for the presidency themselves, in order that platforms may be framed by those responsible to the people for carrying them into effect."<sup>1</sup> During the following year a number of bills were introduced into Congress providing for a uniform nation-wide presidential primary, for the regulation, and even for the abolition of the national conventions.<sup>2</sup> None of these passed, and subsequently, due to the war and to the defects developed not only by the presidential-preference primaries but by state-wide primaries as well, popular interest in the subject seems to have lapsed.

Practical  
results of  
presidential  
primaries

As far as practical results are concerned, presidential-preference primaries seem to have exerted a marked effect in one only of the three national campaigns during which they were used. Although employed in ten states only in 1912, they revealed the popular sweep of the Roosevelt movement in a startling way, which materially strengthened his position at Chicago, although it did not enable him to control the convention. It was due to this fact, no doubt, that a number of states introduced presidential-preference primaries in the years immediately following.

<sup>1</sup> New Jersey state conventions have been of this type since 1911.

<sup>2</sup> For details and criticisms of the Ferris National Presidential Primary bill and other bills on the same subject introduced in 1914, see *Am. Yr. Bk.*, 1914, p. 68. Cf. W. D. Lewis, *op. cit.*, chap. xiii. For the presidential-preference vote of various states in 1912, see table given by E. Stanwood, *History of the Presidency*, vol. ii, p. 239.

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Owing to the peculiar circumstances of the campaign of 1916, however, this had little, if any, effect on the situation. President Wilson was unopposed on the Democratic side; Roosevelt forbade his friends to make any contest for him, and Hughes, as a member of the Supreme Court, was not in a position to enter upon an active campaign. A few favorite sons secured indorsements in the presidential-preference primaries of their own states, but this meant nothing. Again in 1920 the results of the preferential primaries were too scattering to count for much. On the Republican side the total popular vote of various candidates was approximately as follows: Johnson, 900,000; Wood, 725,000; Lowden, 375,000; Hoover, 350,000; and Harding, 150,000.<sup>1</sup> The sums of money used by some of the aspirants were sufficiently large to prove that the cost of fighting presidential primaries in a large number of states is beyond the resources of any but millionaire candidates, or candidates supported by groups of millionaires.<sup>2</sup>

With this record of futility and of the excessive, not to say corrupt, use of money behind them, it is not surprising that a few states have repealed their presidential-preference primary laws. There would seem to be no reason, however, why delegates to national conventions should not be chosen in direct-primary elections and required to state, for printing on the ballot, the names of their first and second choices for the Presidency. Though bristling with difficulties, the problem of applying direct primary methods to presidential nominations is not insoluble.<sup>3</sup>

Long before delegates are chosen the backers of the principal aspirants for the presidential nomination are

Future  
use of  
presidential  
primaries

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*, p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> On the campaign costs of the presidential-preference primaries prior to the Republican national convention of 1920, see A. W. Page "The Meaning of What Happened at Chicago," *World's Work*, vol. xl, pp. 361-377 (Aug., 1920).

<sup>3</sup> For an admirable statement of the difficulties, see C. E. Merriam, *ibid.*, pp. 289-298. R. S. Boots presents a comprehensive survey of the subject with proposals for reform in "The Presidential Primary," supplement to the *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. ix, no. 9 (Sept., 1920).

"Favorite  
sons," "logi-  
cal candi-  
dates,"  
"dummies"

busy in every section of the country where they hope to gain support.<sup>1</sup> The friends of a "favorite son" are particularly anxious to line up behind him a solid delegation from his own state. "Logical candidates," or candidates with a nation-wide following, sometimes defer to this natural inclination, meanwhile seeking to secure the second choice of favorite-son delegations in their own interest. At times state bosses allow delegations to be pledged to local party luminaries, intending to use the latter merely as "dummy candidates." The "dummy" may be quite sincere, indeed he may be the only person ignorant of his intended fate. At the appointed time he will be sacrificed relentlessly, the bosses meanwhile having made the best possible bargain for the transfer of his votes to a more promising aspirant.

Popular  
interest in  
presidential  
candidacies

As returns come in from the various primaries throughout the country, the newspapers publish estimates, corrected from day to day, of the strength each candidate will develop in the convention. In some cases the nomination is thus virtually assured in advance. This was true of McKinley in 1896 and 1900; of Roosevelt in 1904, and of Taft in 1908. On the Democratic side the two-thirds rule makes prognostication more difficult, but in 1916 Wilson's nomination was a foregone conclusion. More commonly, however, it is impossible to tell who will be the successful nominee even after all the delegates are chosen. Some of them are not definitely pledged and refuse to disclose their preference until the first ballot is taken. Meanwhile the newspapers vie with one another in discussing presidential possibilities, and the most intense popular interest is manifested in the outcome.

Principal  
types of  
national  
delegates

As by far the most important body known to the American party system, particular interest attaches to the human material represented in a national convention. Election as delegate at large is coveted as an especial distinction,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Croly, *Marcus Alonzo Hanna*, chap. xiv, for an excellent detailed account of the work on behalf of McKinley prior to the Republican convention of 1896.



## NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

owing to the fact that such offices represent the party in an entire state and are relatively few in number. Usually these posts are reserved for the United States Senators, the governor, the state boss, and possibly one or two of the most important party leaders in the state.<sup>1</sup> A large number of the district delegates also are either county or city leaders or their most dependable lieutenants. In conventions of the party in power federal office holders always form a considerable element and sometimes play an important part in compelling the convention to give heed to the wishes of the President either as to a renomination or as to the choice of his successor. Both President Hayes and President Cleveland issued executive orders forbidding this practice, but it has continued, nevertheless. Of course officers of the civil service are debarred from such activities. In no particular is actual party practice more clearly at odds with the spirit of the Constitution, which in Art. II, Sec. 1 provides that "no Senator or Representative, or person holding an office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector." At present the function of a presidential elector is nominal, but that of a delegate is far from being so. On other than constitutional grounds the impropriety of this practice is manifest. Much of the bitterness of the Taft-Roosevelt struggle of 1912 was due to the activities of the administration element in the Republican national convention of that year.

Among other elements represented in national conventions business men are occasionally put forward out of gratitude either for past contributions to party funds or in lively expectation of similar favors to come. Although not business men in the ordinary sense, some of the politicians in the convention are there in the interest of great corporate concerns. At times bosses and leaders, knowing themselves to be too unpopular to contest for delegations, step aside and allow prominent citizens of good

Other  
elements in  
national  
conventions

<sup>1</sup> On the strength of the senatorial group in the Republican national convention of 1920, see F. M. Davenport, "Conservative America in Convention Assembled," *Outlook*, vol. cxxv, p. 375 (June 23, 1920).

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party standing, but not too closely affiliated with the party machine, to be chosen. Of course the latter may prove to be mere figureheads, and in any event are at a disadvantage in the convention, owing to lack both of experience and of a definite following. A few places are reserved for distinguished ex-Senators, former ambassadors, or other party "Nestors"; and there is a thin sprinkling of writers and journalists, orators, college professors and presidents. From the Southern states a considerable number of negro delegates are sent to Republican national conventions, usually under the careful supervision of federal office holders.

Organiza-  
tion and  
independent  
delegates

It is undeniable that elements representing the organization brand of politics and interested chiefly as office holders or office seekers are too largely in evidence at national conventions. Of course it happens at times that a machine may be badly beaten in the primaries of a given state, resulting in the election of delegates of unusual independence and of progressive ideas. And in every convention a certain influential proportion of the delegates stand out as interested in the determination of party policies rather than in the division of the loaves and fishes. Of recent years women have been elected delegates to national conventions in increasing numbers. In 1924 there were 397 women delegates and alternates in the Republican, and 474 in the Democratic national convention.

Expenses  
of  
delegates

Although now chosen largely in official primary elections, delegates to national conventions are purely party officers and as such receive no salaries. Nevertheless they must meet heavy expenses for transportation and hotel accommodations. For a time two states recognized the public character of their work and provided payment for attendance.<sup>1</sup> It is to be feared that those delegates needing "help" to go to the convention seldom fail to find it. Probably it is obtained in most cases from the campaign fund of the candidate of their choice. In recent conven-

<sup>1</sup> Minnesota law of 1913, repealed 1917; Oregon law of 1910, repealed 1915.

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tions which have been prolonged by deadlocks the practice has developed of looking to candidates for the payment of the excess thereby occasioned in the hotel bills of delegates.

Ordinarily each state delegation travels in a body to the convention, using a gayly decorated special car or train for the purpose. There is, of course, much caucusing and confabulation *en route*. Arrived in the convention city, they take up quarters together which have been reserved for them months in advance at some conveniently located hotel.

Special  
trains and  
head-  
quarters

For a week or ten days prior to the date fixed for the opening of the convention the national committee is in session arranging various preliminaries, of which the most important is the preparation of the temporary roll of the convention. At the appointed hour and day the chairman of the committee calls the convention to order. Prayer is then offered by some clergyman of prominence. A similar invocation is made at the beginning of each day's session; ministers being chosen from as many of the larger denominations as possible. Following the prayer the official call for the convention is read by the secretary, and the chairman of the national committee proposes the name of the person selected by the committee to act as temporary chairman.

Opening  
of the  
convention

It is in choosing the incumbent of this office that the convention first finds its voice. If there is no storm brewing the selection of the committee is ratified without question and the temporary chairman thereupon delivers a "key-note" speech which he has carefully prepared in advance. If, however, some large element of the convention feels that the nominee of the committee is hostile to its interests it may place another candidate in the field. The ensuing vote then becomes a test of strength which may forecast all the subsequent decisions of the convention. Thus in 1896 the Democratic National Committee placed a "gold" man in nomination, but the convention substituted a "silver" man. In the Republican convention of 1912

Temporary  
chairman

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Root, whose name was proposed by the National Committee and who had the backing of the Taft forces, was challenged by McGovern, the candidate of the La Follette group, who also received the support of the Roosevelt delegates. On the basis of the temporary roll the vote was 558 for the former and 501 for the latter.

The four  
great  
committees

Next in the order of business is the appointment of the four great committees of the convention, namely, the committees on rules and order of business, on permanent organization, on credentials, and on platform and resolutions. This is accomplished by calling the roll of the states, each state delegation responding by naming one of its members for each of the committees. Of the four committees the first two named above are ordinarily of slight importance. Unless some faction in the convention sees a chance to gain an advantage by introducing a change in the rules and order of business, the committee of that name reports in favor of following the methods of the preceding national convention of the party.<sup>1</sup> As to the order of business, the usual program is (1) reports of committees, (a) on credentials, (b) on permanent organization, (c) on platform and resolutions; (2) nominations first of the candidate for President, and second for Vice-President; (3) miscellaneous motions and resolutions.

Contests

If there are few contests among the delegates the work of the committee on credentials may amount to little more than the approval, possibly with a few changes, of the temporary roll as prepared by the National Committee. Given a large number of contests, however, particularly when two or more presidential candidates are of substantially equal strength, it is evident that the composition and work of this committee may decide the outcome of the convention. Thus in the Republican national convention of 1912 there were 210 nominally contested seats out of a

<sup>1</sup> Thus in the Republican convention of 1880 the efforts of Conkling, leading the Grant forces, to introduce the unit rule made the action of the committee on rules of extreme importance. Cf. J. B. Bishop, *Presidential Nominations and Elections*, chap. xi.

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total of 1,078. Only 102 of these were brought before the National Committee and with regard to 40 of these there was no minority report. So closely were the lines drawn between the Taft and Roosevelt forces, however, that the remaining 62 amounted to more than a balance of power. The committee on credentials wrangled over its report during the whole of the third day of the convention, and the fight over the report occupied the convention during the fourth and part of the fifth day. It is not necessary to go into the bitter accusations made by Roosevelt and his followers, first, against the temporary roll as prepared by the National Committee, then against the decisions of the committee on credentials, and finally against its acceptance by a vote participated in by delegates whose seats were in question.<sup>1</sup> Suffice it to say here that with the acceptance of the report of the committee on credentials further resistance by the Roosevelt forces was recognized as futile.

With this important business out of the way the committee on permanent organization makes its report, nominating a permanent chairman and other officials to hold office for the remainder of the convention. Here again disgruntled factions may start a fight against the committee's report, although this is less likely to occur than in the case of credentials. Upon the choice of the permanent chairman he is escorted to the platform and the convention is again regaled with a "keynote" speech.

Permanent  
organiza-  
tion

Meanwhile the committee on platform and resolutions has been hard at work listening in rapid succession to representatives of business interests, of agriculture, of labor, of the professions, of women's organizations, of reform associations, of wets and drys, of oppressed nationalities, and the like. Rarely, however, is the platform as a whole left to be drafted on the spur of the moment. Sometimes a distinguished leader of the party is requested long in advance to prepare a draft to be submitted to the com-

Platform  
and  
resolutions

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. Stanwood, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 241-245; J. B. Bishop, *op. cit.*, chap. xiii, on "The Steam-roller Convention."



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mittee. If the party is in power at Washington it is also laid before the President, to secure his advice and approval before being turned over to the committee.

Republican  
advisory  
committee  
of 1920

Prior to the Republican convention of 1920, Will H. Hays, chairman of the National Committee of that party, appointed a large advisory committee on policies and platform. In order to develop the best-informed opinion of the country this committee prepared and circulated widely among students of public affairs exhaustive questionnaires dealing with such subjects as the high cost of living, immigration, industrial relations, merchant marine, social problems, and federal taxation. The experiment was an interesting one which may be developed successfully in the future, but it does not appear that the large mass of information collected by the advisory committee received much attention in the course of the necessarily hurried deliberations of the committee on platform and resolutions.<sup>1</sup>

Majority  
and minor-  
ity reports

Not infrequently sharp opposition develops within the platform committee on important questions of policy. Particularly is this likely to be the case when a powerful group is struggling to commit the party to a new stand, as in 1896, when the Republican Party accepted a new definition of its policy in respect to the currency. At times, as, for example, with the silver plank in the Democratic convention of the same year, the committee is unable to agree on the question at issue, with the result that majority and minority reports are submitted by it to the convention.<sup>2</sup> In either event the matter is fought out on the floor of the convention immediately after the committee's report is presented.

Platform  
style

Viewed as specimens of the art of political writing, the platforms of the two great parties follow exactly the same models. The style is stilted rather than dignified, insuffer-

<sup>1</sup> For details regarding personnel and work of the advisory committee, see the *Republican Campaign Text-book, 1920*, pp. 482-485.

<sup>2</sup> E. Stanwood, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 546. Further illustrations in recent party history are discussed in chaps. v and vi above.

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ably verbose and dull for the most part yet rising at times to declamatory and denunciatory vehemence. Words of ingratiating sound but of indefinite meaning abound: "just," "liberal," "adequate," "safe," "sane," "reasonable," "sound," "well-proportioned," "honest," "fearless," "wise," "fundamental," "progressive." In spirit platforms are banal, smug, self-righteous. The errors of a party are never confessed; at most attention may be directed *in extenso* to difficulties encountered in realizing its policies, for which, of course, the opposition is to blame. Both parties celebrate their illustrious leaders, their glorious traditions. The party temporarily in power "points with pride" to a long list of epoch-making recent achievements; the party temporarily out of power "views with alarm" the same list, conceived as leading inevitably to national downfall and dishonor. Considered as documents for popular consumption, platforms are much too long, and, unfortunately, they are growing longer. The national platforms of the two major parties for 1912 and 1916 were more than twice as long as those of the 'seventies of the preceding century. In 1920 the platforms jumped to twice the length of those of 1916.

Criticisms of literary defects are of small moment, however, in comparison with criticisms leveled against platforms as programs for future political action. At times planks are inserted that are sheer evasions. If there are two factions in the party it may be possible to hold them together by adroitly "straddling" the issues which divide them. Or a troublesome controversy like that between the "wets" and "drys" may be met by maintaining a discreet silence. Even with regard to the policies which the party favors there are nice distinctions of attitude. Thus a purist in language might find it difficult to distinguish between the exact degree of commitment implied by the following typical platform phrases: "the party expresses sympathy with," "believes in," "approves," "commends," "recommends," "favors," "advocates," "endorses," "stands for," "demands," "urges," "pledges."

Platforms  
as programs

Significance  
of plat-  
forms

In a natural but somewhat extreme reaction of disgust a distinguished foreign critic declared American party platforms to be "only a farce—the biggest farce of all the actions of this great parliament [*i.e.*, convention] of the party. . . . The sole object of the platform is, in the present day, as formerly, to catch votes by trading on the credulity of the electors."<sup>1</sup> A more philosophic view would recognize that most of the platform evasions and straddles are a necessary consequence of our two-party system.<sup>2</sup> Such a view would also take into account those instances, as in 1896, 1912, and 1920, when real issues of major importance rose between the great parties. Defective in many ways as platforms are, they nevertheless reveal political tendencies of undoubted significance and hence deserve careful scrutiny by voters and students.

Utterances  
of candi-  
dates

Platform pronouncements are sometimes modified or supplemented by the utterances of candidates. An unprecedented instance of this sort occurred in 1904 when Judge Alton B. Parker, the Democratic nominee, telegraphed the convention before its adjournment unqualifiedly stating his adhesion to the gold standard, an issue on which the party platform was silent.<sup>3</sup> As a rule, however, the candidate waits until the notification ceremonies or even later in the campaign to make known his specific views. Taft's action following the Republican convention of 1908, and Wilson's espousal of the Adamson Act late in the campaign of 1916, are cases in point.<sup>4</sup>

Speeches or  
letters of  
acceptance

In this connection particular importance is attached to the candidate's speech or letter of acceptance. As a rule the latter consists largely of a reaffirmation of the various planks making up the party's platform. If, however, it introduces modifications or additions of importance, the

<sup>1</sup> M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, vol. ii, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> See this book, chap. vii.

<sup>3</sup> E. Stanwood, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. this book, chap v; also P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics*, pp. 48, 52. On Taft's speech of acceptance, see *Outlook*, vol. lxxxix, p. 775 (Aug. 8, 1908); and *Independent*, vol. lxxv, pp. 283, 330 (Aug. 6, 1908).

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speech or letter of acceptance is considered to have as great if not greater authority than the platform so far as these new points are concerned. "Whether the President will keep the promises of the candidate or not, in any event you have not the manufactured voice of a machine, but the living accents of a man whose personality marks him out for and lays him open to responsibility."<sup>1</sup>

With the platform disposed of, the stage is set for the climax of the great convention drama, the nomination of a candidate for the Presidency, followed by what unfortunately is too often an anti-climax, the nomination of a candidate for the Vice-Presidency. It is a striking fact that up to this point Democrats and Republicans are in substantial agreement as to all matters of convention organization and procedure. This is all the more remarkable considering that the two major parties are presumably opposed to each other in principles and policies, and, further, that each was quite free to develop its own methods of convention organization and procedure. With regard to nominations, however, a well-defined difference has developed at two points in the rules of the great parties. Up to a comparatively recent date the Democratic party inclined strongly toward, and always made more or less use of, the so-called unit and two-thirds rules. The Republican party, on the other hand, was even more strongly inclined against these rules, and successfully resisted the occasional attempts made to introduce the unit rule in the interest of certain candidacies.<sup>2</sup>

Nomina-  
tions

<sup>1</sup> Ostrogorski, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 262.

<sup>2</sup> As by the Grant third-term boomers in 1880. In both parties most of the efforts made for or against the unit rule were inspired by leaders whose ambitions would be helped thereby. All the more significant, therefore, is the fact that the rule stood so long on the Democratic side and never secured a footing on the Republican side. In one sense it may be said that delegates are voted in the Republican convention as a unit when, as in the case of California, they are instructed by the vote of the entire state. But here the authority is that of a popular vote, not that of a convention or of a majority of the delegates, as under the Democratic unit rule. Cf. C. Becker, "The Unit Rule in National Nominating Conventions," *American Historical Review*, vol. v, pp. 64-82 (Oct., 1899).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

### Two-thirds rule

The two-thirds rule simply provides that no candidate shall be declared nominated unless he shall have received two thirds of all the votes in the convention. It was adopted by the first Democratic national convention, held in 1832, and has governed every subsequent national convention of the party. Doubtless the motive inspiring this rule was that a candidate having behind him not simply a majority, but a two-thirds vote of the convention could appeal with greater authority for the support of party voters.<sup>1</sup> In practice, however, candidates able to secure a majority vote in Democratic national conventions have usually proved strong enough to get the necessary two thirds in the end. However, Van Buren was beaten by Polk in 1844, and Champ Clark by Woodrow Wilson in 1912, after each of the former had succeeded in getting a majority vote.

### Unit rule

The unit rule allows, although it does not compel, the majority of a state delegation in a convention to cast the entire vote of the state. This rule also dates from the earliest conventions of the Democratic party. Although in its origin the unit rule formed no part of the two-thirds rule, the two rules are complementary in character. Manifestly, if states are permitted to plump their votes under the unit rule there is danger that a simple majority may be too quickly attained by an unsatisfactory candidate. Indeed, under this rule it is possible that a candidate favored with the support of a slim majority in a few of the larger states might be declared to have a majority of the votes in the convention when his actual strength, as disclosed by a poll of individual delegates, would be considerably less than half the votes. In either of these eventualities the two-thirds rule affords opportunity for a shift of votes and a possibly better ultimate choice.

### Republican attitude

As the Republicans did not accept the unit rule, they were not obliged to safeguard themselves from its possible untoward results by adopting the two-thirds rule. The

<sup>1</sup> Other reasons, rather far fetched in character, are suggested by M Ostrogorski, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 271.



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centralizing tendencies of that party inclined it strongly to disregard state lines in national conventions and to insist upon polling the votes of district delegates as individuals. On the other hand, there is an obvious relationship between the state-rights tenets of the Democratic party and the unit rule.

The two-thirds rule has been criticized as a violation of the democratic principle of majority rule. In effect it does give a minority of one third in a Democratic national convention the power to prevent a decision so long as it holds together. And the unit rule has been criticized because it causes much unholy bargaining within state delegations acting under it, particularly when they are nearly evenly divided. Also there was a great deal of quibbling as to the application of the latter rule. In general, Democratic conventions were much more ready to sustain it when imposed by state conventions than when it was imposed merely by a majority vote of the state delegations.

Criticism of  
two-thirds  
rule

The unit rule reached its widest and most effective employment by the Democratic party between 1860 and 1900. With the advent of direct primaries at the end of this period it was exposed to a new form of attack. Delegates pledged to a given candidate and elected by the party voters of their districts on the strength of that pledge were bound to resist attempts, whether made by the state convention or by a majority of the state delegation, to record their votes in favor of another candidate. A sensational fight on this issue broke out on the floor of the Democratic national convention in 1912. The result was a sweeping modification of the unit rule to read that the national convention would enforce it when enacted by a state convention, "except in such states as have by mandatory statute provided for the nomination and election of delegates and alternates to national political conventions in congressional districts, and have not subjected delegates so selected to the authority of the state committee or convention of the party, in which case no such

Modifica-  
tion of unit  
rule in 1912

rule shall be held to apply."<sup>1</sup> With the progress of direct-primary legislation before and after the adoption of this new rule the possibility of voting state delegations solidly in Democratic conventions has been much reduced. Logically this development has destroyed the basis of the two-thirds rule in large part, but so far the party has not taken steps toward the repeal of the latter.

### Convention frenzy

Observers of American national conventions, particularly those from other countries, have been immensely impressed by the apparently wild frenzy accompanying the making of nominations—the demonstrations in the balconies, the more or less inspiring music of many bands, the competitive cheering by supporters of each candidate at the first mention of his name, the uprooting of state standards and parades of delegates about the floor of the convention hall. Perhaps to this category should be added the nomination speeches which at least touch off the earlier of these displays of enthusiasm. Of recent years, however, orators have shown more restraint in presenting the claims of their favorites.<sup>2</sup> Even outside the convention hall every art known to the publicity agent and campaign manager is employed, especially in the hotel sections of the city, to impress upon delegates the irresistible nature of the popular demand for their candidates. And delegates are among the most prominent participants in these demonstrations. At the focal point of all these extravagances, the convention with two thousand delegates and alternates crowding its floor and from ten to fifteen thousand spectators in the galleries would seem to be ideally qualified to illustrate the principles of mob psychology. No doubt some of the manifestations of all conventions

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. B. Bishop, *op. cit.*, p. 96; Stanwood, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 256; C. E. Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> Contrast the somewhat extreme earlier citations of Ostrogorski, vol. ii, pp. 263-270, with the speech quoted by C. L. Jones in *Readings on Parties and Elections in the United States*, pp. 103-106. C. E. Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 286, notes that an eloquent nominating speech has not yet secured the nomination for the candidate named, but that in two conventions the eloquence of an orator has led to his nomination—Garfield at the Republican convention of 1880, and Bryan at the Democratic convention of 1896.

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do illustrate these principles and a few nominations perhaps may be explained on such grounds. All appearances to the contrary, however, the forces of unreason have surprisingly little to do with the result. Most of the delegates to national conventions and certainly all those wielding considerable influence, are seasoned politicians. They know exactly how the noise-making and spectacular effects are produced and feel a corresponding contempt for such clap-trap devices.

Another popular view of national conventions is that their every move is dictated by a small group of big bosses and leaders meeting secretly and bargaining with one another in advance of the sessions. There is, it must be confessed, considerable ground for this belief. However, the power of bosses and leaders varies considerably between the two parties and from time to time within the same party. Nor is it always concentrated behind the same candidacy. Always there is an anti-boss element, to say nothing of delegates instructed for and sincerely devoted to various aspirants for whom they vote, regardless of consequences, to the last roll call.

Dictation  
by big  
bosses

The theory that conventions are merely sham battles which conceal the dominating personalities of a few bosses is, then, too simple to fit all the facts. A more satisfactory theory recently advanced by Professor Merriam takes into account not only the influences already noted, including that of bosses and leaders, but also the influence of the administration if the party is in power in Washington, of the congressional group in the convention, and finally of party and public opinion in the country at large.<sup>1</sup> Delegates come to the convention pretty well charged with the sentiments of "the folks back home," and during its sessions, especially if these are prolonged, are deluged with messages from constituents. During Mr. Bryan's famous struggle for control in the Democratic convention of 1912, it is said that 110,000 telegrams were sent by members of the party to delegates in Baltimore.

Other  
influences

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 281-286.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

### Balloting

If the majority of the forces represented in a convention are united behind a single candidate the nomination for the Presidency may come very quickly. Out of the sixteen nominations by the two major parties from 1892 to 1920, inclusive, eleven were made either by acclamation or on the first ballot. If, on the other hand, the various forces represented in a convention are divided fairly evenly between two or more aspirants, the struggle between them is likely to develop into a long-drawn-out endurance contest. Roll call follows roll call in monotonous succession; one after another the states in alphabetical order report their votes, with possibly a few shifts from one candidate to another; day sessions are supplemented by evening and even by all night sessions; and the convention may drag well on into a second week. Thus forty-four ballots were required for a decision at the Democratic convention of 1920 in San Francisco; forty-six at the Democratic convention of 1912 in Baltimore; and thirty-six at the Republican convention of 1880 in Chicago. Fifty-seven ballots were taken without result before the split in the Charleston Democratic convention of 1860, and in 1852 the Democratic convention required forty-nine, and the Whig convention fifty-three ballots before nominations were made. Owing to the two-thirds rule, deadlocks are much more common in Democratic national conventions. As a rule, decisions as to nominations are reached with great promptness by the Republicans. From 1892 to 1916, inclusive, no presidential nomination made by the latter party required more than four ballots. However, ten ballots were required for the nomination of Harding in 1920.

### Deadlocks

When a deadlock occurs the outcome is determined largely by the forces of attrition, made irresistible in the end, it may be, by long hours, intense heat, and the rapidly mounting hotel bills of delegates. Or it may be broken suddenly and dramatically in favor of one of the leading candidates whose managers have succeeded at last in making a combination with the forces of one or more of the minor aspirants. Sometimes the only possible solution is

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the nomination of a "dark horse" who, because of a conciliatory attitude or the smallness of his following, has avoided the bitter animosities engendered between the principal contestants. To the latter class belong the nominations of Hayes in 1876, Garfield in 1880, Harrison in 1888, Bryan in 1896, and Harding in 1920. No matter whether a presidential nomination has been reached quickly or at the end of a long-drawn-out struggle, it is customary, following the decisive ballot, to pass a resolution "making it unanimous." There have been times, however, when a few "die-hards" among the followers of a defeated aspirant have refused to unite in this gesture of party reconciliation and harmony.

Politicians are wont to describe the sum of qualities desirable in a candidate under the general head of "availability." It is an exceedingly elastic term, the content of which changes from time to time. Thus after a period of brilliant and vigorous executive leadership an aspirant of homely and restful type is likely to be preferred, and *vice versa*. Availability includes not only the personal qualities and record of a candidate, but all the reactions thereto of the various sections of the country, of the leaders of the party, of its rank and file, and, finally, of the people generally.

Availability

Unquestionably the most important single quality embraced under this highly inclusive term is the residence of the candidate in a large pivotal state, especially if his record shows or is supposed to show his ability to carry it. Of the twenty-four Republican and Democratic nominees for the Presidency between 1876 and 1920, inclusive, eight were Ohio men, of whom six were elected; and seven were New Yorkers, of whom three were elected. In two campaigns during this period the candidates were taken from the same one of these two states—Roosevelt and Parker from New York in 1904, Harding and Cox from Ohio in 1920. Both states are doubtful politically. In addition, New York has the special advantage conferred by its large block of votes in the electoral college, while Ohio is con-

Residence  
in pivotal  
states



sidered particularly worthy of attention because its situation makes it a connecting link between the East and the West. For reasons similar to those which have made Ohio pre-eminently the mother of recent Presidents, Indiana is resorted to frequently for vice-presidential candidates. Between 1876 and 1920, inclusive, the major parties called upon the latter state no less than seven times to furnish candidates for that office. Twice during the same period candidates for the Presidency were taken from the Hoosier state.

Neglected  
areas

As a corollary to the importance ascribed to these few states in the matter of presidential and vice-presidential nominations must be mentioned the comparative neglect of candidates of equal or perhaps greater merit residing in other states. A Pennsylvania Republican, for example, is handicapped for nomination by his party because it is so certain to carry the state in any event. A Pennsylvania Democrat seems even less available to his party because he cannot hope to win the electoral vote of the state. The exception in the case of Hancock of Pennsylvania, nominated by the Democrats in 1880, is more apparent than real since his military career had kept him out of the state of his birth the greater part of his life. The same thing holds true of aspirants living south of Mason and Dixon's line, none of whom has been nominated for the Presidency by either of the major parties since 1860. With the exception of Bryan, nominated by the Democratic party in 1896, 1900, and 1908, neither of the great parties has gone west of the Mississippi for a presidential candidate since 1860.<sup>1</sup> Aspirants from states with a small vote in the electoral college or from states distant from the center of population are distinctly less available for these reasons.

Renomina-  
tions

Another point of major importance in this connection is the practice regarding renominations. Since 1860, with two exceptions, every President securing that office by

<sup>1</sup> John C. Frémont, nominated by the Republicans in 1856, was at that time a resident of California.

## NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

election has been renominated for a second term by his party. In the first of these cases, that of Hayes in 1880, the President did not desire to run again; and in the second, that of Roosevelt in 1908, the situation was complicated by the three and a half years which he served after the death of McKinley. Even so, repeated disclaimers had to be made by the incumbent to convince his friends that he would not be a candidate. It would be putting it too strongly to assert that every President has a traditional right to renomination for a second term at the hands of his party. Certain it is that a President who had manifestly lost popularity with the country or who had alienated a powerful element or faction of his own party would meet opposition if, nevertheless, he insisted upon his claim. Of course the incumbent may use the administration influence, always powerful in a convention, to his own advantage. But apart from this the logic of the situation demands the renomination of a President unless he has been an undeniable failure. Not to do so places the party in the equivocal position of confessing failure during the past four years and of asking for a continuance of power on top of that record. While we seem to be in a fair way to establish, within limits, a tradition in favor of renomination to a second elective term, the anti-third-term tradition holds with unabated force.

Recent defeat in a popular election either for the Presidency or for a Senatorship, governorship, or other high office has, of course, a chilling effect upon the availability of an aspirant. It is a striking fact that the Republican party has never renominated a candidate once defeated for the Presidency. On the Democratic side, however, Cleveland was thus renominated after defeat once (1888); and Bryan twice (1900, 1908).

Effect of  
defeat in  
recent  
contests

Turning now to personal qualities, availability includes tact, affability, "magnetism," imposing appearance, tireless energy, and oratorical ability. It is not to be forgotten that the nominee must be a successful candidate before he can become President; in other words, he should be

Personal  
qualities in  
relation to  
availability

an able campaigner. Undoubtedly the known high efficiency of Blaine, Garfield, Bryan, and Roosevelt as campaigners contributed greatly to their choice. With few exceptions presidential candidates have been capable public speakers. Tact, affability, and magnetism are important qualities in making friends, but they must be exercised with dignity and discrimination. Too obvious fraternization with the wrong sort of friends—political bosses, railroad or trust magnates, for example—may prove fatal. At times public taste may clearly prefer the man of few words, of bluff or reserved demeanor, capable of turning a cold shoulder upon undesirable allies even of his own party.

Crushing  
burdens  
of the  
Presidency

The death of President Harding and the physical breakdown suffered by President Wilson have directed attention anew to the enormous and increasing burdens imposed by our highest executive office. Some measure of the crushing weight of these burdens is afforded by the fact that the average age of the first fifteen Presidents of the United States (Washington to Buchanan, inclusive), all of whom died natural deaths, was nearly seventy-four years, whereas the average age of the subsequent eleven presidents who are deceased, omitting the three who were assassinated, was slightly over sixty-five years. The average age at which Presidents of the earlier group reached the office by election was fifty-eight years; of the later group, fifty-one years. Of the second group, four elected Presidents were inaugurated while still under fifty; four between fifty and fifty-four; and three only after they had attained fifty-five years of age. During the period from 1789 to 1860 men of fifty-five or even over sixty were preferred for the Presidency. Since 1860 only one President was more than fifty-five at the time of his inauguration. It is evident from the foregoing figures that an unconscious adjustment has been made to the increasing burdens of the Presidency. Of course it would be going too far to assert that availability now ceases abruptly at the middle fifties, but it certainly diminishes rapidly as that age is left behind.

## NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Every detail of a man's record is eagerly canvassed in determining his availability as a candidate—his home life, occupation, and social habits as well as his public career. Among professional men lawyers are most sought after as presidential candidates, although not to so great a degree as for United States Senatorships. However, a lawyer who has distinguished himself as the representative of great corporate interests is certain to be attacked on that score. Religious affiliations are also considered. All Presidents of the United States who have been church members were connected with some Protestant sect.<sup>1</sup> Conspicuous or meritorious service in war has been an important factor in the past. In civil office it is quite possible that a man's services may have been so long continued and so important as to reduce his availability. His public career may have compelled him to antagonize powerful political leaders, editors, or business interests. It sometimes happens, however, that there are those who "love him for the enemies he has made." Paradoxically enough, a state or local record may represent a higher degree of availability for a presidential nomination than a national record. The enemies of a successful mayor or governor are likely to be comparatively few and to reside largely in his own city or state: the enemies of a prominent Senator or Cabinet official may be not only numerous, but well distributed over the country as a whole.

Record  
of the  
aspirant

It is in considerations such as the foregoing that one must look for an answer to Bryce's famous question, "Why great men are not chosen President."<sup>2</sup> Thirty years have elapsed since the inquiry was propounded, however, and during that period the Presidency has been occupied by two or three men of powerful qualities—Cleveland, Roosevelt and Wilson—whether or not history will ultimately pronounce them great. Other incumbents during this pe-

Are great  
men not  
chosen  
Presidents?

<sup>1</sup> The number of Presidents belonging to each sect is given as follows: Episcopalian, 8; Presbyterian, 8; Unitarian, 4; Methodist, 3; Reformed Dutch, 2; Disciples, 1; non-members, 2. *World Almanac*, 1922, p. 429.

<sup>2</sup> *American Commonwealth*, vol. i, chap. viii.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

riod were at least men of distinction. For Presidents of colorless or weak personality like Polk, Pierce, and Buchanan one must go back to the middle period of our history. In the course of our history as a whole it must be admitted that a long line of notable statesmen has been passed over: Hamilton, Marshall, Gallatin, Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Seward, Sumner, Hay, Root, and others.<sup>1</sup>

Motives of  
delegates

In a well-known paragraph Bryce has summed up the attitude of delegates who are, of course, most nearly concerned with the questions involved in the availability complex. "Four sets of motives are at work," he observes. "There is the wish to carry a particular aspirant. There is the wish to defeat a particular aspirant, a wish sometimes stronger than any predilection. There is the desire to get something for oneself out of the struggle—*e.g.*, by trading one's vote or influence for the prospect of a federal office. There is the wish to find the man who, be he good or bad, friend or foe, will give the party its best chance of victory. These motives cross one another, get mixed, vary in relative strength from hour to hour as the convention goes on and new possibilities are disclosed."<sup>2</sup> Surely in addition to or at least as an amendment to the first of the foregoing, mention should be made of the motive of those who desire conscientiously to choose from among the national leaders of their party the man best qualified to be President of the United States.

Vice-  
presidential  
nominations

Having accomplished its supreme purpose—the nomination of a presidential candidate—the convention turns somewhat perfunctorily to the choice of a candidate for the vice-presidency. It is seldom that more than one ballot is devoted to the settlement of this point. Naturally the convention is much more concerned with the selection of a suitable "running mate" for the presidential candidate than with any other aspect of the situation. While the convention must bear its share of blame for this rather superficial attitude, the responsibility goes back to the na-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. B. Munro, *The Government of the United States*, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, chap. lxx.



## NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

ture of the vice-presidential office itself as determined by the Constitution. Except in case of a vacancy in the Presidency, it is a position of altogether minor importance. On the other hand, a suitable candidate for the Vice-Presidency may play a very useful and even a leading part in determining the outcome of a national campaign. In the campaign of 1900, for example, Roosevelt as candidate for the Vice-Presidency played a much more active part than McKinley, candidate for the Presidency.

With this motive in mind the convention is likely to nominate for the Vice-Presidency a man who can carry a large pivotal state other than that from which the presidential nominee was taken—witness the prominence of Indiana in this respect referred to above. The Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution makes it necessary to choose the vice-presidential candidate from a state other than that of the Presidential nominee, but political expediency would dictate this course in any event. Apart from the matter of residence in any particular state, a vice-presidential aspirant may seem especially available if he commands a following in a section of the country other than that in which the presidential nominee is most popular. Or he may be chosen in the hope that he will contribute generously, or aid in securing large contributions to campaign funds. In other respects, the attributes constituting availability for vice-presidential honors are substantially the same as in the case of presidential aspirants, but they are computed on a much less exacting scale.

Geographical and personal considerations of the above character are no more reprehensible in the case of the Vice-Presidency than in the case of the Presidency. An altogether different judgment must be expressed regarding the strong tendency to deal with the vice-presidential nomination as a sort of a consolation prize awarded to placate a powerful faction which has been defeated in the convention on certain important planks in the platform or on the presidential nomination. This tendency, coupled with the somewhat inferior grade of ability characteristic of vice-

Availability  
of vice-  
presidential  
aspirants

Vice-  
Presidency  
as a con-  
solation  
prize; con-  
sequences

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

presidential nominees due to the minor importance of the office itself, is responsible for the mournful fact that four out of the five cases of succession owing to the death of the President have resulted in weak or unsuccessful administrations.<sup>1</sup> Bad as are the effects of such administrations upon the country, to the party responsible for them the results in the form of factional fights and disruption have been much more disastrous.

Notification  
committees

Following the nomination of a vice-presidential candidate the convention appoints two notification committees, and then adjourns *sine die*. These committees are composed of one delegate from each state. Some five or six weeks after the adjournment of the convention they visit the homes of the candidates and there solemnly inform them of their nomination. The occasion may take the form of a simple front-porch affair or of a large-scale political rally. In either event the candidate responds in a formal speech of acceptance, which may be followed a few weeks after by a lengthy letter of acceptance. The significance of the declarations made in the speech or letter of acceptance of the presidential candidate has been touched upon above.

Estimate  
and criticism  
of  
national  
conventions

To national conventions the most important functions performed by American political parties are confided. Within the last quarter century direct-primary election laws have either swept away entirely or regulated stringently all lesser conventions. The national conventions remain virtually unchanged in organization and procedure in spite of the fact that every abuse alleged against minor conventions has been alleged against them. Yet it is easier to criticize than to reform them, as the preceding discussion of presidential primaries has shown. However, some minor defects are in process of correction. Thus the assignment of delegates upon a basis of population as reflected in congressional apportionment rather than of party strength is being met by the Republican party, which

<sup>1</sup> Written prior to the death of President Harding and the succession of Coolidge.

## NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

alone suffered severely on this score. Large blocks of delegates who "will stand without hitching"—that is, who are controlled by state and local chieftains or by administration leaders—still make their appearance in national conventions, although perhaps not to so great an extent as in the days before direct-primary elections. By a vigorous use of the latter device on the part of electorates this evil could be greatly reduced.

More serious is the criticism that national conventions are at all times irresponsible and sometimes arbitrary in handling their great powers. They may, for example, admit or reject delegations at will, regardless of the primary-election laws of any state. However, these laws have now become sufficiently established to make nullification at the hands of a convention exceedingly dangerous business. Abuse of power to make up the temporary roll by the hold-over National Committee and by the committee on credentials, as in the Republican convention of 1912, is more likely to occur. Of course, it may lead to party schism and defeat of the national ticket; but most of the delegates who are responsible for the abuse are not directly touched by these penalties. They are not themselves candidates or, if so, expect to win in their petty local contests. In their factional frenzy such delegates are not unwilling to risk party defeat, provided only they can retain their grip on the organization. Of course, no amount of provision can prevent or should attempt to prevent a party split when it is due and needed. But deliberate party wrecking in order to retain control of the machine is another matter. In this connection President Wilson's suggestion previously quoted might prove helpful. A convention composed largely of delegates who were themselves candidates for conspicuous offices could be punished promptly and severely for its misdeeds.

Finally national conventions are grossly incompetent as organs for the formulation of party policies which, in case of success at the polls, may become the nation's policies. As we have already noted, they are unsuited in personnel;

Abuse of  
powers

As organs  
for the  
formulation  
of policies

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

and they are far too large, too hurried, and too irresponsible for the proper performance of this weighty function. Moreover, they are too much engrossed with the selection of a presidential candidate to give sufficient attention to party policies. As long as these two functions are intrusted to the same body the latter is doomed to suffer partial neglect at least. It is a curious fact of American politics that since presidential candidates are needed only once every four years, the parties content themselves with definitions of their national policies in platforms spaced by that interval of time. In several countries of continental Europe parties are accustomed to hold diets or congresses which define and modify their policies from year to year or as important issues arise.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, these diets make no nominations and are thus free to devote their time exclusively to questions of policy and tactics. The practice has its disadvantages, but it does tend to keep the parties alert and up to date on issues. If we in the United States are to develop interest in political policies and principles as opposed to interest merely in nominations and patronage, it will be necessary for us to devise party institutions capable of real deliberation and frank expression on national affairs.

### BOOK NOTES

AUTHORITATIVE information on the proceedings of national conventions may be procured from the *Official Report of the Proceedings*, published every four years by each of the two major parties. That of the Republican party for 1920 runs to 292 pages; of the Democratic party for the same year to 718 pages.

All the general works on political parties cited under Chapter I devote considerable space to national conventions, the best recent treatment being that of C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*, pp. 274-307 (1922).

<sup>1</sup> R. Michels, *Political Parties*, pt. ii, chap. iv; E. McC. Sait, *Government and Politics of France*, chap. x; and the author's *Government and Politics of Switzerland*, chap. xiii.

## NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, Vol II, pp. 248-270 (1902), presents an extremely vivid picture of the convention scene, emphasizing too much, however, the effectiveness of spectacular and noise-making devices. For a briefer statement along the same lines see his *Democracy and the Party System*, Ch. VIII (1910). A more restrained view which takes into account both the "orderliness" and "excitability" of American temperament is given by James Bryce, *American Commonwealth*, Vol. II, Ch. LXX. For interesting materials regarding various notable conventions from 1830 to 1912, the reader may consult J. B. Bishop, *Presidential Nominations and Elections*, Chs. I to XIV (1916). The biographical works referred to following Ch. I may be consulted with great profit regarding national conventions in which McKinley, Bryan, Roosevelt, and Wilson were nominated.

The two-volume *\*History of the Presidency* by E. Stanwood, is a mine of facts and statistical information on national conventions of all parties from their inception to and including 1916. Larger historical treatises covering periods from 1830 on may also be consulted with profit for the more critical national conventions falling within their scope, J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850* (7 vols., 1850-1877, published 1893-1906), and *History of the United States from Hayes to McKinley, 1877-1896* (1919), by the same author, being especially useful.

W. J. Bryan, *A Tale of Two Conventions* (1912), is a collection of letters written to a syndicate of newspapers on the Republican and Democratic national conventions of that year, both of which he attended as a reporter and in the latter of which he played a decisive part. Although, naturally, not without partisanship, the letters are well written and are illustrated with numerous cartoons; they retain something of the flavor of that exciting time and show actual developments in the two conventions with unusual clarity.



## CHAPTER XII

### CAMPAIGN METHODS

Profession-  
als turn to  
the mass of  
voters

UNDER the old convention system all the work culminating in nominations was performed by professional or semi-professional politicians. In its closed form, which is by far the more commonly employed, the direct primary calls in, at the last stage of the process, the registered or enrolled party voters. The latter are, if not active politicians, at least avowed partisans. Under either system it becomes necessary, once nominations have been made, to turn to the great mass of voters, including the lukewarm, the independent, the apathetic, and the hostile, and out of all these elements to fabricate, if possible, a plurality in the final election.

Methods

The methods employed to achieve this supreme end are numerous and varied. Roughly they fall into two groups: (1) Efforts to reach voters as individuals; and (2) efforts to reach voters in the mass.<sup>1</sup>

#### METHODS OF REACHING VOTERS AS INDIVIDUALS

Canvassing

Individual appeal to voters may be made by direct personal contact or by mail. Candidates "buttonhole" their constituents at every opportunity. In cities much of the work of "ringing door bells," or canvassing from house to house, formerly had to be done of evenings or on holidays, when the men of the family were at home. Now that women have been enfranchised, appeals may be made to them during the day, preferably at hours when they are

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States*, p. 218 *et seq.*

## CAMPAIGN METHODS

not engrossed in household labors. In rural districts the advent of the cheap automobile has greatly extended the range of such work. Candidates also meet many voters at places of public resort—in rural districts—the general store, the post office when the mail is being distributed, the station platform at train time, auctions and sheriff's sales, grange meetings and county fairs. In cities voters may be buttonholed in poolrooms, club houses, eating places, soft-drink establishments, and the thousand and one other places of public gathering. Formerly the saloon was the great center for political gossip and appeal, and, doubtless, would have been such even if the proprietor had not been interested in politics on his own account.

No great expenditure of time is required to appeal to all the voters personally in rural districts and villages. But in cities and larger districts and in state-wide contests this kind of campaigning requires careful organization and the employment of large numbers of canvassers who incur heavy bills for salaries, expenses, and transportation. Under such conditions this method can be employed effectively only by candidates who have the support of the party organization or who are able to raise the funds necessary to create an organization of their own.

Cost of  
canvassing

Voters may also be reached individually by postal cards, letters, or by the distribution of handbills. Here, again, of course, the cost depends upon the size of the district. In the pre-convention campaign of 1912 the total expense of sending one postal card to each of the 1,600,000 voters in the state of Pennsylvania was \$23,000.<sup>1</sup> Letters cost from three to ten cents each, according to length, kind of paper used, etc. Holcombe estimates that a single communication sent during the gubernatorial campaign of 1916 to each voter in the state of New York would cost from \$35,000 to \$175,000.<sup>2</sup> The distribution of handbills is no less expensive, and they are much more likely to be thrown away unread.

Use of the  
mails

<sup>1</sup> W. D. Lewis, *Life of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 218.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

### Value of individual appeal

Practical politicians are unanimously agreed as to the value of appeals to the individual voter. Mail matter is, of course, less effective than direct personal approach. To many voters in humble circumstances, however, it is something of an event to receive a letter, especially a letter making a deferential appeal, signed by persons of prominence. Often such communications are laid aside carefully, to be taken out, reread, and pondered at leisure. Direct personal appeal by tactful and experienced campaigners is much more seductive, and, moreover, may be adapted with the nicest accuracy to the circumstances and prejudices of the individual voter. In all communities a considerable minority of the electorate is but slightly moved either by conviction or by partisanship. A citizen of this type regards the casting of his vote, especially for local offices, as a personal favor to be conferred upon the candidate he likes best or who is most solicitous. Hence the great effectiveness of a direct appeal to individuals for political support.

### METHODS OF REACHING VOTERS IN THE MASS

As already noted, the other principal method of campaigning is to approach voters in groups or as a mass. This may be accomplished (1) by the holding of political meetings or (2) by the distribution of campaign literature and other materials designed to make a general appeal.

### Campaign meetings

Campaign meetings range all the way from the humble soap-box or cart-tail affair on a street corner to imposing mass meetings in metropolitan cities. For demonstrations of the latter character campaign committees rent the finest auditorium, engage the best band, provide elaborate decorations, distribute flags and literature to every seat, and advertise orators of national reputation. The cost of such meetings held at the Philadelphia Academy of Music in the campaign of 1920 ranged from \$1,250 to \$2,000

## CAMPAIGN METHODS

each.<sup>1</sup> Of course demonstrations of so expensive a character are not of every-day occurrence. If funds are available, one may be given early in a campaign to sound the "keynote," and another shortly before the end to wind it up in a climactic blaze of glory.

Indoor political meetings, particularly those of a pretentious character, suffer from the defect that they are attended chiefly by adherents of the party holding the meeting. Members of other parties seem to have a feeling of intrusion, perhaps even of disloyalty to their own party, when they make their appearance thus in the "camp of the enemy." Consequently, indoor political meetings offer little opportunity to gain converts, and are chiefly useful for the purpose of increasing the enthusiasm of already convinced partisans. Hence the frenzied demonstrations at such meetings; hence, also, the insincere and ineffective rodomontade of many orators and the comparative absence of rational discussion. In England partisans of other political faiths frequently attend meetings and do not hesitate to heckle speakers. This custom may breed disorder, but it has the decided merit of opening up unanticipated points for discussion. As a result English political speakers are compelled to prepare themselves more thoroughly and to cultivate the art of quick and effective rebuttal. It is to be regretted that joint political debates, once so common and so profoundly influential in forming popular opinion, are becoming extremely unusual in our latter-day campaigns.<sup>2</sup> Under the Richards primary law in South Dakota (Ch. 234, L. 1917), an effort was made to provide for compulsory joint debates. In addition to publicity pamphlets this law required that "at

Defects  
of the  
campaign  
meeting:  
"heckling"

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Edgar W. Lank, Democratic city chairman of Philadelphia, itemizes the smaller sum as follows: rental, \$250; band of fifty pieces at \$10 each, \$500; advertising, \$250; decoration, flags, literature, \$250; total, \$1,250. With abundant funds available, he estimated that the majority party usually spends from \$1,500 to \$2,000 on such meetings. As the Academy of Music seats three thousand, this would make the cost per person in attendance from forty to sixty-five cents.

<sup>2</sup> See J. F. Rhodes's account of the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858, in his *History of the United States*, vol. ii, p. 321, *et seq.*

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

least one presidential and sixteen gubernatorial public joint debates, between the candidates for president and between the candidates for governor, within the party, who have filed proposal papers with the secretary of state, shall be held in this state, between the first Monday in January and the fourth Tuesday in March"—*i.e.*, during the pre-primary campaign. Detailed provisions were made regarding challenges to debate, and failure on the part of a candidate to accept such challenges operated as the legal withdrawal of his name from the primary ballot. In case of sickness, however, a candidate was permitted to select a proxy to represent him. The debates were restricted to "paramount issues," which were defined elsewhere in the law. Personalities were barred. In addition to the pre-primary debates, party candidates for governor were obliged to participate in twelve joint public debates between September 1st and November 1st of each general election year. If the party nominee for governor did not comply with this requirement he lost his place on the ballot and the vacancy was to be filled by another who also was obliged to debate or get off the ticket. Mileage was paid debaters at the rate of ten cents per mile both ways. However, this law was repealed after only four years' experience. (S. D., Chap. 329, L. 1921.) According to a competent authority within the state the ostensible reasons for the repeal were the expense to the state and the undignified way in which the debates were conducted. Others hold the conviction that the politicians were frightened at the prospect that organization candidates would be beaten in debates before the people by their opponents. It is clear that the debates were farcical in large part, that they were not confined to paramount issues, and that personalities were indulged in freely. On general grounds the plan was also open to criticism in that it was confined to candidates for executive office. Less objection could be made to its application to legislative candidates. Recently the League of Women Voters has inaugurated the practice of holding joint meetings to



## CAMPAIGN METHODS

which candidates of all parties are invited to present their case on equal terms. This innovation has much in its favor. If developed fully it should not only improve the quality of our political discussion, but also force the nomination of better candidates.

Outdoor political meetings, particularly those of an informal character, are much less costly and much more successful in reaching adherents of other parties. Of this character are street meetings, meetings held at factory gates during the noon hour, meetings at country fairs and granges. The noise and confusion of open-air meetings, and often the inclemency of the weather, are desperately hard on all but the most leather-lunged and brass-throated orators. They may console themselves with the thought that they are preaching to both saints and sinners, politically speaking, but conversion of the latter never takes place in the ecstatic, wholesale manner characteristic of the cruder kinds of religious revivals.

**Outdoor  
meetings**

Political "spellbinders," or orators, of every conceivable variety are to be heard at campaign meetings. College undergraduates with a liking for debate frequently volunteer for the sake of the experience to be gained. Young lawyers not yet overwhelmed with legal business enlarge their acquaintance and improve their oratory on the stump. Other rising professional and business men, progressive farmers, and ambitious labor leaders seize the opportunity presented by local meetings to further develop in the service of their party such talent as they may possess for public speaking. At the other end of the scale public men of the highest ability are enlisted—leading lawyers to a greater degree than members of other professions, but also eminent divines, distinguished college presidents, and men of large affairs generally. Governors of states, Congressmen, and particularly United States Senators are featured as "big guns" at the meetings where they deign to appear. During the national campaign of 1920, the passage of the Suffrage Amendment created a sudden and unprecedented demand, which was met with

**"Spell-  
binders"**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

difficulty, for women speakers to instruct and enthuse the great new mass of women voters.

Speakers'  
bureaus

Campaign orators of the highest eminence are directed by a speakers' bureau maintained at the national headquarters of the party. They are sent out on extended tours to those states where their services will be most effective. All their traveling expenses are paid out of the party treasury, and some of them receive in addition an honorarium which may run as high as one hundred dollars for each speech. It is not unusual for the national or state committee to pay the expense of transporting speakers from place to place, the local committee in charge of the meeting paying for their local entertainment. Orators who demand and receive payment for their speeches are generally considered to have surrendered thereby any claim for further reward at the party's hands, as, for example, appointment to office. On the other hand, the speaker who contributes his services frequently puts in a claim for consideration on this basis in case his party is successful. Training schools for less experienced orators are often established at national and other party headquarters, where instruction is given not only in the art of public speaking, but also as to what issues are to be avoided or emphasized. Party headquarters in our states and principal cities also maintain speakers' bureaus which stand prepared to send out orators in response to every call coming from the territory they serve.

Specializa-  
tion in  
campaign  
oratory

In campaign oratory, as in every other form of vote-getting activity, specialization is the order of the day. Every effort is made to adapt the speaker to the particular audience. A "mud-slinger" or a professional funny man, either of whom might make a great hit in a "slum" ward, would create nothing but disgust in a college community. On the other hand, of course, a political oration along Phi Beta Kappa lines would be considered hopelessly "high brow" in the "slum" ward. If, therefore, a call comes from a steel-working district, the astute manager of a speakers' bureau will send a steel worker, preferably

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a popular labor leader; if it comes from a Polish quarter, he will send some one of that nationality who can recount the woes and glories of Poland's history while at the same time he makes capital adroitly for the party's candidates. To a college community a prominent professor will be sent; to a "tough" ward, an ex-prize-fighter; to the outing of a commercial club, a successful man of large affairs; and so on to the end of the list. For easily gullible street crowds "fake debates" may be staged. Other things being equal, a candidate is listened to with more attention than a mere campaign orator. The people feel that the candidate has something personally at stake, they take a sporting interest in the kind of fight he is putting up, and are eager to form an estimate of his ability based on his public appearance.

Formerly a considerable sentiment existed against active campaigning on the part of candidates for offices of unusual prominence or dignity. At least the appearance was cultivated of the office seeking the man rather than the man seeking the office. In the case of elective judgeships in our higher state courts, this sentiment still holds, particularly where the nonpartisan ballot is used for such offices. But it has been greatly attenuated since 1896 and 1912, so far as higher executive offices, including the Presidency, are concerned. Of course a candidate to succeed himself as Chief Executive is largely inhibited from active campaigning by the heavy burden of public duties. Even in the case of a presidential aspirant who is free from official obligations, however, it may seem advisable to avoid the appearance of hasty, undignified scrambling for the votes of the multitude. If Mohammed will not go to the mountain the mountain may be brought to Mohammed. In other words, the presidential candidate remains at home, but day after day throughout the campaign he receives delegations of his adherents who come from all parts of the country often in excursions numbering thousands of persons. To these political pilgrims the candidate then speaks in all dignity from his own front

"Front-  
porch" and  
"whirl-  
wind"  
campaigns

porch.<sup>1</sup> Or the front-porch campaign may be modified, as in the case of Harding in 1920, by sending the candidate out on a limited number of trips to important cities. Finally a number of recent candidates for the Presidency have made "whirlwind" campaigns, visiting all the more important states and cities in the country and delivering addresses not only at large meetings, but also from the rear of the observation car to the crowds gathered at every stopping point of the special train. Thus Bryan traveled 18,000 miles in the campaign of 1896. Four years later, Roosevelt, as Vice-presidential candidate, covered 21,000 miles, making nearly seven hundred speeches.

Has  
campaign  
eloquence  
declined?

A large number of critics, both foreign and domestic, lament the decline of campaign eloquence in the United States. Ostrogorski attributes this decline (1) to the advent of the machine and consequent deterioration of representative government; (2) the rise in the power of the press, from which, rather than the platform, people take their political convictions; and (3) the emergence of economic issues which lend themselves less readily to oratorical treatment than the burning issues of slavery and secession prior to the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt that oratorical ability and acknowledged leadership, which at an earlier period were frequently united in one and the same person, are now more commonly dissociated. The leader or "boss" who has mastered the art of organization and manipulation, including particularly the raising of campaign funds, not only exercises greater power, but is also inclined to look with something closely akin to contempt upon the mere orator. On the other hand, it is generally admitted that the "spread-eagle" style of speaking, once so widely cultivated and admired, has been well-nigh laughed out of existence. It may be doubted, more-

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Croly gives an excellent account of the inside management of the McKinley front-porch campaign of 1896 in his *Marcus Alonzo Hanna*, p. 214 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, vol. ii, pp. 308-318.

## CAMPAIGN METHODS

over, whether people take their political convictions from the press quite so trustingly as in the days of which Ostrogorski wrote. With regard to the difficulty of presenting economic issues in oratorical form, it may be conceded that the protective tariff was treated usually in an insufferably dull and narrow spirit. Nevertheless, economic issues are capable of developing a profound human appeal, as was shown especially during the campaigns of 1896 and 1912. The tremendous questions raised by the World War and the League of Nations are certainly as susceptible to oratorical treatment as any of the issues that led to the Civil War. Altogether it is questionable whether political eloquence in the United States is so greatly inferior to that of previous periods as most of the critics would have us believe. Certainly the campaign speeches of Roosevelt, Elihu Root, and Charles E. Hughes; of Bryan, Woodrow Wilson, and Homer Cummings, represent a high standard of eloquence. In the last analysis, however, it must be admitted that political oratory has been compelled to share its influence with the press and the machine.

The second principal method of reaching voters in the mass is by advertising and the distribution of political literature. It is becoming more and more the custom toward the end of hard-fought political campaigns to print full-page political advertisements which appear simultaneously in all the great dailies of the country. Of course this is extremely costly, but it is also extremely effective.<sup>1</sup> Certainly the party which for lack of funds is unable to purchase space in this wholesale way is at a grave disadvantage. To minor newspapers and the foreign-language press a large amount of "copy" and even of "plate matter" in all sizes and of every description is regularly forwarded. Of course propaganda is much more effective when it does

Newspaper  
propaganda

<sup>1</sup> The cost of one insertion of a full-page political advertisement depends upon the number of agate lines per page and the special rate per line made for advertisements of this class. At present the New York *World* charges for each insertion, \$1,344; the New York *Times*, \$1,539 (Sunday, \$1,657); the Chicago *Tribune*, \$1,708 (Sunday, \$2,440).



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

not reveal its origin, taking rather the form of editorial comment, distorted headlines, "colored" news, or the suppression of news. It is widely alleged and believed that powerful influences and large sums of money are used to secure control of our more important journals for partisan purposes, especially during national campaigns. Indeed, as was noted above, this belief has operated to reduce appreciably public faith and credit in newspaper discussions of political questions. With regard to the extent and character of the pressure thus brought to bear, it must be admitted that little is definitely known. From the point of view both of honest politics and of honest journalism the matter demands searching inquiry and the widest possible publicity.

Billboards,  
"movies,"  
"canned  
speeches"

In addition to newspaper advertising, extensive use has been made in recent campaigns of billboards and moving pictures. Both afford opportunities for familiarizing millions of voters with the names and features of candidates and the principal shibboleths of the contending parties. These are decidedly superficial forms of political education, but it should be remembered that the interest of many voters is also decidedly superficial. Among other modern innovations may be mentioned the "canned speeches" prepared for phonographic reproduction and used with more or less success at ordinary political meetings or in connection with moving pictures showing the candidate in action. With the recent development of the radio, candidates have begun to talk from Washington to constituents in Middle Western states.

Campaign  
"literature"

Campaign "literature," as it is somewhat flatteringly called, makes its appearance in bewildering profusion during our national campaigns and is also used, although to a much smaller extent, in state and local contests. The most elaborate productions in this field are the campaign text-books issued every four years by each of the major and some of the minor parties. Primarily these books are designed for the instruction of speakers and field workers rather than for the reading of the rank and file.

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In earlier years they were of hip-pocket size, but in 1920, while retaining the old format, the Democratic manual ran to 504, and the Republican to 496 pages.

Campaign text-books usually contain rather fulsome biographies of the party candidates, the platforms of both parties topically arranged in parallel columns with more or less extended annotations and references, the candidates' speeches of acceptance; special articles by various authorities, and extended quotations from speeches of Congressional or other party leaders on the principal issues of the campaign, glowing eulogies upon the party's record and unsparing criticisms of the opposing party's record—all supported by statistical tables and graphs and made available for instant reference by a copious index. Hastily prepared, often inaccurate and always partisan, campaign text-books nevertheless contain much information of value to the student of politics.

Campaign  
text-books

For popular reading the parties send out enormous quantities of other documents ranging from pamphlets and speeches of considerable length to leaflets and handbills. In local campaigns candidates' cards with photograph and brief appeal are widely used. The writer possesses one such of more than usual originality which reads as follows: "Publisher of the — Herald 23 Years. Justice of the Peace 19 Years. A Democrat 42 Years. Progenitor of Eleven Future Citizens, the Only Gang I Cater to. Self Starting, No Crank, Uncontrolled. I Need your vote Very Badly. May I Have It? Thank You!"

Pamphlets,  
leaflets,  
etc.

A large part of the bulk of campaign literature is made up of the party platforms, the "records," life stories, and character sketches of the candidates, the speeches of acceptance, and the keynote speeches of noted party leaders. Some idea of the nature of the other documents sent out by the Republicans in 1920 may be gained from the following titles: "A Billion a Month, Twenty Billions in All: What the Democrats did with the Stupendous Mass of Wealth Taken from the People to Fight the War"; "Billion and a Half Saved by Republican Congress"; "Light-

Titles of  
campaign  
documents

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ening the Load for Labor"; "Why the Republican Party Appeals to Women"; "The Cox-Wilson League is a League of War"; "Selling Out America, Comments on the League of Nations"; "Protection and Prosperity"; "What the Democratic Party has Promised, What It Has *Not* Done"; "Why Progressives Support Harding"; "An Open Letter to Young Voters." During the same campaign the Democrats issued the following: "Winning the War, Republicans Besmirch America's War Record"; "Nero Fiddled While Rome Burned, Shameful Record of Republican Leadership"; "Democrats Have Kept the Faith with Labor"; "Women of America, You are Interested in the Election of Cox and Roosevelt"; "Covenant of the League of Nations"; "Normalcy in Practice, Senator Harding's Congressional Record"; "Sound Banking System Built by Democrats"; "Records of Achievement, Seven Years of Democratic Rule *vs.* Sixty Years of Republicanism"; "Republican Promises and Performances"; "The 'Do-Nothing' Republican Congress, Futile Hunt for Fraud in Conduct of War."

### Other campaign devices

In addition to the foregoing principal means of reaching voters as individuals or in the mass, a number of miscellaneous campaign devices may be mentioned. To the past rather than the present belong "barbecues," "pole raisings," and torchlight processions. Picnics and outings to a seaside or sylvan resort still retain popularity, particularly among the henchmen of some slum politician who pays all expenses. Emblems, badges, and buttons are distributed by the millions in every national campaign. Straw votes are taken in every chance assemblage to see which way the political wind is blowing. In the pre-convention and final campaigns of 1920, a weekly journal of wide circulation conducted by mail a nation-wide straw vote which attracted much attention and foreshadowed to a degree the actual results.

### Systematic canvasses

Systematic canvasses of voters are sometimes made by party workers in doubtful districts or states. Large funds are needed to carry out this work on any considerable

## CAMPAIGN METHODS

scale. If the necessary money can be secured two or even three canvasses may be made, ninety, sixty, and fifteen days before the election. Campaign managers attach considerable importance to such canvasses as showing where money may best be spent to secure results. On the other hand, voters are becoming more and more inclined to keep their intentions to themselves, thus frustrating to a degree the work of the canvassers. Women voters are inclined to be much more secretive than men on this score. Usually, however, a resourceful party worker can ascertain a voter's inclinations, if not from the voter himself, then from his neighbors or friends.

Whether canvasses are made or not, party workers industriously prepare "poll books" which are indispensable for use on election day. These poll books contain the names of all the voters of a precinct, alphabetically arranged, with street and post-office addresses, and party affiliations indicated by abbreviations. Practical party workers may also keep secret records which, besides the above facts, give the color or nationality of each voter, his church affiliation, his employer, the names of persons to whom he owes money or is under other obligation—in short, any and all information which will aid in getting him to "line up right." If the voter is venal this secret record may also show the price at which he is accustomed to sell out to one or the other party.

Poll books

Throughout a campaign, but especially in the last few days before election, political managers make sweeping claims of victory. Campaign bets are also placed, and the prevailing odds are reported in the press for the political effect such news may have. It has been alleged at times that political managers or enthusiasts have wagered large sums with the purpose of changing the betting odds. Undoubtedly there is a certain "band-wagon" vote which desires always to be on the winning side and which is impressed by straw votes, by the betting odds, and by sweeping predictions of victory.

Prophecies  
and bets

Campaign lies are unlimited in number, protean in form.



Campaign  
lies,  
"roorbacks"

Sometimes they assail the religious convictions of a candidate; more often they attack his personal life in language which is unprintable. Plain facts and issues are also frequently misrepresented, more or less adroitly, by public speakers and writers. In the heat and hurry of a campaign much of this misrepresentation escapes detection. Even when "a lie is nailed" and retraction made, the lie, having the advantage of a considerable start and larger headlines, may outrun the retraction. One form of campaign falsehood has acquired a nickname of its own—the "roorback." It is a particularly atrocious lie set afloat in the last hours of a campaign in the hope that no denial will be fleet enough to overtake it. Of course campaign lying may be, and, as a matter of fact often is, overdone, the net reaction being favorable to the candidate or party unfairly maligned. No man of decent instincts, no newspaper of standing, will lend assistance to the propagation of political mendacity. Yet too often of recent years there have been disturbing evidences indicating the existence of subterranean campaigns of malicious gossip, organized and conducted on a national scale by competent publicity experts and supported by ample funds.

"Hoop-la"  
and  
"gum-shoe"  
campaigns

At times political managers consider it advisable to make every possible use of noise-producing and attention-arresting devices. In popular parlance this is called a "hoop-la," or "hurrah," campaign. At other times political managers go on a "still hunt" for votes and are said to be conducting a "gum-shoe" campaign. In the latter case they make quiet house-to-house visits or interview voters under cover, neglecting no precaution to keep the political enemy in ignorance of their maneuvers. Minority parties or factions in particular resort to "gum-shoe" methods and sometimes succeed in giving the overconfident majority a rude surprise on election day. However, by the use of "scouts" and spies and by noting the surface indications inseparable from most campaign methods, an astute political manager usually contrives to learn as much



## CAMPAIGN METHODS

of the strategy of the opposing party as he knows of his own.

Attempts have been made to classify campaign methods as (1) those appealing primarily to the emotions; and (2) those appealing chiefly to the intelligence.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult, if not impossible, however, to draw the line between the two in practice. A mass meeting may be a frank appeal to crowd psychology, or again it may be conducted upon a high intellectual plane. Personal appeals may be base pandering to low instincts or clear-cut face-to-face argument, and so on with every item in the long list of campaign methods. While the distinction breaks down, therefore, as a basis of classification, it is valuable, nevertheless, as characterizing two kinds of appeal. In practice nearly every campaign method combines both intellectual and emotional factors in varying proportions. Nor does it follow that the latter are always low or base. There are emotions that ennoble as well as emotions that degrade. In the light of modern psychology it is plain that a campaign appeal of purely intellectual nature would move but few. Only by some appeal to the emotions are the great masses of men to be moved, and men must be moved in masses to achieve victory in politics. Comparing recent campaigns with those of the period before the Civil War, however, a marked tendency is observable to resort less and less to "hoop-la" methods or the ranker forms of emotionalism.

Public campaign methods usually end with more or less climactic effect on the Friday or Saturday evening preceding the Tuesday of election. But the campaign is not over until "the last vote is in and counted." On Monday a determined but silent struggle begins. Final canvasses are checked up, last appeals are made personally to wavering voters, and, most important and dubious of all, large sums of money are handed down to local and ward leaders. On election day itself conveyances are provided to bring aged

Attempted  
classifica-  
tion of  
campaign  
methods

Climax  
of the  
campaign

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics*, p. 255.

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and infirm voters to the polls; political understrappers hang about the polls as close as the law allows to explain the ballot and to whisper eleventh-hour advice to voters; watchers with poll books check off early voters; and, beginning as early as two or three o'clock in the afternoon workers are sent out with motorcars to bring in the laggards. After the polls close, the watchers, from their observation posts just outside the railing, keep track as the vote is counted by the election officers. The latter process usually lasts into the small hours. With a long ballot which has been freely scratched, it may even take the greater part of the following day. As results are announced the tireless watchers dash to the nearest telephone and send them in to city or county headquarters.

"Building fences"

Using the term broadly, it may be said that political campaigning is continuous in the United States. As soon as a primary or convention is over the defeated aspirants, and also the successful ones if they desire another term, may set to work "building fences" for the next primary or convention, to be held two or four years later. The public, however, seldom takes much interest in this premature campaigning, which is carried on largely among leaders and active party workers. Active campaigning, which involves an appeal to the electorate as a whole, may be divided into two periods: (1) the pre-election campaign or campaign proper; and (2) the pre-convention or pre-primary campaign.

Length of campaigns

A presidential campaign proper in the United States lasts from the national conventions held late in June or early in July to the election on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November—altogether a period of four months. But the campaign for the choice of delegates to the national conventions engrosses public attention pretty thoroughly for several months preceding the conventions. State and local campaigns are much briefer, lasting sometimes only from the primary late in September to the final election in November, while the pre-primary campaign is limited to the five or six weeks beginning with the dat

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fixed by law for the circulation of nomination papers. In general, state and local contests attract far less interest than a national campaign. Occasionally, however, a hard-fought battle in a large city creates as much of a furore locally as a national campaign.

There is a general conviction in the United States that our campaigns, particularly the quadrennial national struggles, are too long, and that they are "bad for business." In England general parliamentary election campaigns last from the dissolution of the House of Commons to the end of the period fixed in the election writs—that is, from four to eight weeks. Of course our ballots are much longer and involve a much greater variety of offices than the ballots used in England. So far as the disturbance to business caused by our presidential campaigns is concerned, it must be admitted that this is more frequently a subject of conversational complaint than of demonstration by statistics and economic argument. In spite of the haziness which enshrouds the subject, it seems likely, however, that business must be disturbed somewhat while a presidential campaign is actively in progress, although by no means to the same extent as during financial crises or widespread labor troubles. While a presidential campaign is being waged business men and their customers are more or less engrossed in political matters lying outside their immediate concerns. But the neglect thus occasioned is probably a small factor as compared with the uncertainty in business circles as to the way in which pending economic issues will be dealt with by one or the other major parties in case of its success.

Against the unsettlement of business, which may fairly be charged to political factors and to these alone, must be set the education of the public, including business men themselves, on pending economic questions. Moreover, it is of major importance to have such questions decided by a popular majority, for decisions reached in this way are usually acquiesced in heartily by the public and thus possess a stability which means much for the safe conduct

Are  
campaigns  
"bad for  
business"?

Utility of  
campaigns

of future business. Finally it must be remembered that a long campaign period affords opportunity for thorough education of the electorate and the defeat of hasty dangerous popular delusions.<sup>1</sup> Of course a popular delusion successful at the polls might be held up by the checks and balances of our government. But in this case the agencies of government responsible for the delay would be accused of thwarting the will of the majority. No doubt the people "have a right to make their own mistakes" and to acquire wisdom through experience, but it is a costly and at times a disastrous process. It is manifestly more satisfactory to defeat a popular delusion by a "campaign of education" resulting in a vote against the erroneous view.

Effective-  
ness of  
campaign  
methods

From the point of view of a political manager all the different methods and modes of campaigning sketched above must meet one test, that of success. To what extent are political victories actually won by speeches, documents, advertising, canvassing, and all the other devices employed by experienced leaders? Judging from the eagerness with which funds are collected for these purposes, great confidence must be reposed in their efficacy. Experts are agreed, however, that no amount of campaigning will save a party from a popular determination to chastise it. On the other hand, if a landslide is coming in favor of a party, all that its managers have to do, although they will seldom admit the fact, is to guide it into the proper channels. But landslides are not every-day occurrences, nor is it always certain that they will arrive as per predictions. Given the far more common case of an apathetic electorate and of a fairly even division of strength between parties, there is good reason to believe that the right combination of campaign methods supported by adequate funds will win the victory.

Research  
needed  
on value  
of each  
campaign  
method

In practical politics it is a question not merely of the value of campaign methods in general, but rather of the extent to which each method should be carried within the limit of available resources, and also of adjusting the vari-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Croly, *Marcus Alonzo Hanna*, chap. xvi.



## CAMPAIGN METHODS

ous means employed to the exigencies of the campaign and to the peculiarities of the population in different districts. Considering the large sums constantly being spent for political propaganda, it is rather remarkable that we have no better guides in this field than certain traditional rules of thumb and the idiosyncrasies of the campaign managers in temporary command. By the employment of research methods similar to those applied in analyzing business concerns, efficiency experts should be able to throw light on the relative value of advertising, distribution of documents, speakers' bureaus, and each of the other principal methods of campaigning.

From the point of view of public welfare it is supremely important that campaign methods should be fair and honest. As a matter of fact, every one of the long list of devices discussed above is subject to abuse, although in varying degrees. Personal canvassing, for example, because of its confidential character, readily lends itself to libelous attacks on character and to gross misrepresentation of public issues. The payment of helpers to distribute literature, work at the polls, drive cars, or perform any other of the thousand and one tasks of practical politics may be made so generous as to amount to tacit bribery. Similar "generosity" may be shown in the purchase of campaign supplies, the renting of halls, of carriages and motorcars, the distribution of contracts. Voters may be promised appointive offices or employment with public-service corporations for their support. Or they may be bribed outright either to vote or to abstain from voting.

That "money is the root of all evil" is a saying which is thought to apply with peculiar force in politics. It is evident, however, that some of the abuses which have grown up in connection with campaign methods are not due to money alone. In petty contests where no candidate or party has a fund of any size, mendacity, trickery, and trading are far from being unknown. In all large-scale contests, however, there is no doubt that the use of money in large amounts makes possible the development of gross

Abuses in  
campaign-  
ing

Money in  
campaigns



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

abuses. For this reason our next subject—the collection and expenditure of campaign funds—is a major problem of American party politics.

### BOOK NOTES

COLLECTIONS of campaign documents and “literature” from current or recent campaigns form a useful basis of study in this field. Students should be required to compare such publications as to their accuracy and effectiveness. \**Campaign Text Books*, which are described somewhat fully in the preceding chapter, are the most extensive and valuable compendiums of partisan literature. Attendance at campaign meetings of various parties and reports thereon for class-room discussion and criticism greatly enhance the interest and effectiveness of the study of party activities.

Campaign methods naturally enlist the most active attention of practical politicians, but they have received rather scant treatment at the hands of scientific writers. Nevertheless, helpful brief accounts are presented by M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, Vol. II, Part 5, Chs. IV-V (1902), *Democracy and the Party System*, Chs. IX and X, by the same author; James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, Vol. II, Chs. LXXI-LXXIII; P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics*, Ch. X (1917); A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States*, pp. 218-221 (1916); and C. E. Merriam, *American Party System*, pp. 308-329 (1922). A large amount of material may also be found in A. K. McClure, *Our Presidents and How We Make Them* (1903); and J. B. Bishop, *Our Political Drama* (1904) and *Presidential Nominations and Elections* (1916). The broader background of public opinion which must be reckoned with in all campaigns has been discussed thoroughly by A. L. Lowell and Walter Lippmann in the books referred to under Ch. III.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CAMPAIGN FUNDS AND CORRUPT PRACTICES ACTS

THE high cost of campaigning has more than outrun the high cost of living in the United States. In the Buchanan-Frémont campaign of 1856 the total amount at the command of the Democratic National Committee was less than \$25,000. Four years later the Republican National Committee expended a little over \$100,000 on behalf of Lincoln.<sup>1</sup> Estimates are lacking as to the sums expended during the period of reconstruction, but no doubt they were extremely modest as compared with more recent developments. Most of the money collected at that time came as personal contributions in small amounts from office holders, candidates, job hunters, and enthusiastic partisans.

High cost  
of cam-  
paigning

With the emergence of the tariff issue in national politics it became possible for Republican campaign collectors to secure large contributions from protected manufacturers—a process known colloquially as “fat frying.” At the same time the Democrats were accused of “milking” the large importing interests of the country, which were naturally interested in lower duties. Of these two sources, however, the former was much more productive. The consequent growth of campaign funds in the 'eighties led to

“Fat  
frying”

<sup>1</sup> The figures quoted for 1856 and 1860 are given by Perry Belmont, “Abolition of the Secrecy of Party Funds,” *U. S. Senate Doc. No. 495, 52d Cong., 2d Session* (Washington, 1912). In contrast with these very modest figures, however, it should be noted that Seward's candidacy in the Republican national convention of 1860 was seriously damaged by the charge that his backers had procured a campaign fund of from four to six hundred thousand dollars by the corrupt granting of franchises for street railways in New York City. Cf. J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850*, vol. iii, p. 461.

much heated protest against the use of money in politics. Nor can there be any doubt that money was used at this time for the direct bribery of voters to an extent which nowadays would be impossible. In the campaign of 1888 the pivotal state of Indiana was flooded with two-dollar bills, then the current price of a vote, and the Democrats made much political capital out of a letter said to have been written to local party leaders by W. W. Dudley, treasurer of the Republican National Committee, containing the sentence: "Divide the floaters into blocks of five and put a trusted man with the necessary funds in charge of these five, and make him responsible that none get away and that all vote our ticket."<sup>1</sup>

High-water  
mark of  
1896

The injection of the railroad, money, and trust problems into national politics enormously increased the number of sources from which large campaign contributions could be secured. As early as 1892 the Republican National Committee spent \$1,500,000, and finished the campaign some hundreds of thousands in debt.<sup>2</sup> Under Mark Hanna's leadership the National Committee of that party collected \$3,500,000 during the free-silver campaign of 1896—a high-water mark which was not exceeded for sixteen years.<sup>3</sup> Estimates of the Democratic campaign fund for 1896 run from \$650,000 to \$1,700,000. In 1900, Hanna collected \$2,500,000 for the Republican National Committee, not all of which was used.<sup>4</sup>

National  
campaign  
funds 1904-  
1924

In the following table are presented the best estimates available of national campaign funds from 1904 to 1924, inclusive:

<sup>1</sup> D. R. Dewey, *National Problems, 1885-1897*, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> H. Croly, *Marcus Alonzo Hanna*, p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> Croly, *ibid.*, states that this was the amount as shown by the audited accounts of the committee. Other estimates of the total Republican expenditures during the campaign of 1896 ran as high as six or seven million dollars. Yellow journals and irresponsible politicians placed the figure as high as twelve millions.

<sup>4</sup> Croly, *ibid.*, pp. 322, 325. The Standard Oil Company contributed \$250,000 in 1896 and again in 1900. At the end of the latter campaign the committee returned \$50,000 to the officials of the company.

## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

### ESTIMATED AMOUNTS OF NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FUNDS

Year	Republican	Democratic
1904 .....	\$1,900,000	\$700,000
1908 .....	1,655,518	900,000
1912 .....	1,070,000	1,130,000 <sup>1</sup>
1916 .....	3,829,260	1,958,508
1920 .....	5,319,729	1,318,374
1924 .....	4,000,000	903,908

It will be observed that the only campaign during which the Democrats had a larger fund than the Republicans was that of 1912, when the bolt of the Progressives under Roosevelt occurred. In 1916, the national Republican fund was nearly twice as large as that of the Democrats; in 1920 and 1924 it was four times as large.

The sums disbursed by the national committees as given above are only part of the total amount spent during a national campaign. Congressional committees, state committees, county, city, and other local committees, other political organizations, and private persons as well, raise sums considerable in the aggregate, although, of course, most of these are used for the benefit of party candidates in addition to those running for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency. It is impossible to allocate the use of these various sums as between national and other candidates. Nevertheless, it is well known that during a national campaign the fate of state and local candidacies follows the fortune of the presidential aspirants to a large degree.

Thanks to the exhaustive and painstaking work of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections under the leadership of former Senator William S. Kenyon, it is possible for the first time in the history of the country to summarize all the expenditures made in a presidential election—that of 1920—from the national committees down to and including the state committees in all the forty-eight states, as follows:

Expendi-  
tures of  
other com-  
mittees

Kenyon  
committee  
on expendi-  
tures of  
1920

<sup>1</sup> *Century*, vol. cii, p. 409 (July, 1921). Ray states that the Progressive party spent over \$670,000 in 1912.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## EXPENDITURES IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1920<sup>1</sup>

	Republican	Democratic
National Committees . . . . .	\$5,319,729.32	\$1,318,274.02
Congressional Committees . .	375,969.05	24,498.05
Senatorial Committees . . . .	326,980.29	6,675.00
State Committees . . . . .	2,078,060.55	888,323.64
Totals . . . . .	\$8,100,739.21	\$2,237,770.71

Campaign  
totals for  
1920

The grand total for both parties in the presidential campaign of 1920, as shown by Senator Kenyon's figures, is \$10,338,509.92. This does not include the sums spent on behalf of candidates during the primary campaign preceding the national conventions. The Kenyon Committee investigated the latter subject, however, developing the fact that the total spent in the interest of ten Republican aspirants was \$2,859,551. For seven Democratic candidates \$120,482 was spent. With these additions the total ascertained cost of President-making in 1920, including both pre-convention and post-convention expenditures, was \$14,318,542.92.

Estimated  
totals

Searching as were the processes of the Kenyon Committee which produced the above figure, it must be remembered that they did not attempt to include the sums, doubtless considerable in the aggregate, collected and spent by district, county, city, and other local committees, by political organizations other than parties, and by other groups and individuals interested in the outcome of the presidential election. Moreover, it may be doubted whether any investigation of campaign expenditures has succeeded in getting all the facts regarding various special funds, usually those employed for the most suspicious purposes. Certain it is that in the more scandalous cases of this nature public assertions made by political leaders and by the press nearly always specify sums largely in excess of those stated by the investigating committee. Bearing all these factors in mind, Professor Merriam's estimate of

<sup>1</sup> *Senate Report No. 883, 66th Cong., 3d Sess.* (Washington, 1921).



## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

\$20,000,000 as the total outlay of the two major parties in a presidential campaign is doubtless well within the facts. This does not include election costs proper, which are estimated at \$10,000,000, nor the costs of the primaries. The assumption made by Professor Merriam that equal amounts are spent by the two major parties seems to be in conflict with the figures given in the tables above.

While the largest aggregate sums are spent in national campaigns, it is by no means unusual to employ money freely in contests of lesser scope. Particularly has this been true in senatorial primaries and elections—witness the sensational Stephenson and Newberry cases. Senator Stephenson of Wisconsin admitted under oath that he had expended \$107,793 in the primary preceding his election for the term beginning March 4, 1909. Senator Kenyon in a speech before the Senate, December 21, 1921, said the record showed an expenditure of at least \$263,000 to procure the election of Newberry to the Senate. The Willis amendment to the resolution seating Newberry, January 12, 1922, stated that \$195,000, or possibly "some few thousand dollars in excess," was used in the Michigan primary, and admitted that the expenditure of such excessive sums was "harmful to the honor and dignity of the Senate and dangerous to the perpetuity of a free government." Merriam estimates the expense of a state campaign in a state of average size—say of 3,000,000 population—at \$100,000, not including the cost of county and local campaigns carried on at the same time. In the Pennsylvania primary election of 1922 the Pinchot-for-Governor Campaign Committee alone spent \$117,013, of which \$82,253 was contributed by the candidate and \$29,500 by his wife. In metropolitan cities like New York and Chicago from \$200,000 to \$1,000,000 may be used. Even ward contests may cost \$25,000 and sometimes more.

In defense of large campaign expenditures the plea is sometimes made that they are rendered necessary by the size of the country. Twenty millions for a presidential election may seem large in the aggregate, but it works out

Money  
used in  
other con-  
tests

Defense of  
large cam-  
paign ex-  
penditures

to less than eighty cents for each vote cast in 1920. More than five times as many votes were polled in the latter year than in 1860. Increasing commodity costs must also be taken into account in comparing recent with earlier campaign funds.<sup>1</sup> Further, it is alleged that the use of campaign funds is far more innocent now than in the "rotten 'seventies and 'eighties" of the last century. No doubt comparatively little is now spent for bribery or other directly corrupt purposes. Of recent years most of the money has gone for necessary publicity, for propaganda of an educational character regarding public men and measures.<sup>2</sup> In some quarters it has been asserted that large campaign funds are, for the most part, pure waste.<sup>3</sup> No doubt much of the money is disbursed extravagantly, especially when the funds provided are lavish, but the political effectiveness of ample resources, carefully handled, is beyond question.

Objections  
to large  
campaign  
expendi-  
tures

On the other hand, it is clear that campaign funds have increased in the United States out of all proportion to the growth of the electorate and the rise of prices. Following the excessive figures of 1896 more moderate expenditures characterized the campaigns from 1900 to 1916 inclusive, but 1920 broke all records. No doubt some of the worst abuses of the system have been wiped out by legislation and public opinion, but the system itself remains and is increasing its demands. Although there is less direct bribery of voters than formerly, it must not be forgotten that the

<sup>1</sup> Thus Dun's wholesale price index number for 1896 was 74.3; for 1920 it was 260.4. In the campaign of the former year the total of the lowest estimates of the amounts spent by the national committees of both parties was \$4,150,000; in the campaign of the latter year it was \$6,638,103. On the basis of Dun's figures it could be shown that the larger absolute expenditures of 1920 had less than half the purchasing power of the smaller fund of 1896. But taking the whole course of index numbers from 1860 to the present time it remains true that national campaign expenditures have increased out of all proportion to the rise of general prices.

<sup>2</sup> For an effective statement of the case from this point of view, see Talcott Williams, "High Cost of Elections," *Century*, vol. cii, p. 409 (July, 1921).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "What becomes of the Millions in Campaign Contributions," *Literary Digest*, vol. lxvi, p. 57 (July 3, 1920).

## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

lavish use of money even for legitimate purchases indirectly procures support. Perhaps the greatest evil of the system is that it discourages the candidacy of men of high character and public spirit who are unable themselves to make the large financial sacrifices required, or unwilling to assume the obligations, tacit or express, involved when others make them in their behalf. Millionaires inclined to "open a bar'l" or machine candidates who can tap the resources of the organization have an enormous advantage over other candidates. Finally the reactions of the system are dangerous not only to politics, but also to business. As Croly in his discussion of Hanna's methods puts it, "the very means which was taken by business to protect itself against hostile political agitation was bound in the long run to inflame the irritation."<sup>1</sup> The same writer calls attention also to the fact that as soon as the system "began to work in favor of only one of the two political parties it was bound to be condemned by public opinion." In short, there is abundant justification for the conclusion of Senator Kenyon that "the expenditure of these vast sums is a present and growing menace to the nation."

### CORRUPT PRACTICES ACTS

The general acceptance of this conclusion is shown by a flood of legislation which, beginning in 1890, has continued to the present day.<sup>2</sup> Four main purposes are aimed at by these Corrupt Practices Acts, as follows:

Purposes of  
Corrupt  
Practices  
Acts

- Publicity of campaign contributions and expenditures
- Prohibition or limitation of campaign contributions.
- Definition of legitimate and illegitimate forms of expenditure.
- Limitation of the total amount to be expended.

To secure the first objective of Corrupt Practices Acts, namely, publicity of campaign contributions and expenditures, all candidates and campaign committees are required to make reports, either prior to or following the primary

Publicity

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. M. A. Schaffner, Wisconsin Bulletin on *Corrupt Practices at Elections*.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

and general elections. In some cases carefully itemized statements, accompanied by vouchers for all sums of any considerable size, say in excess of \$10, must be submitted. To fix responsibility and prevent evasion most of the more recent laws contain detailed provisions regarding the formation of campaign committees and the registration of the names and addresses of their officers, particularly the chairmen and treasurers. In 1920 New Jersey devised a scheme whereby campaign managers are required to deposit all their funds in, and expend them through a national bank, state bank, or trust company.<sup>1</sup> To prevent evasion by others than members of official campaign committees many states require either that all contributions except candidates' expenses be made to authorized committees or else that all persons or groups other than candidates or committees shall themselves make reports to a designated state official.<sup>2</sup> On this point an important decision was handed down by Supreme Court Justice E. J. Staley at Albany, N. Y., August 13, 1923, holding that as "an active participant to aid and defeat candidates for public office at the primary and general election of 1922," the Anti-Saloon League of New York was obliged to file a statement of expenditures. It is a matter of common knowledge, however, that campaign committees outside the regular party organizations frequently ignore the provisions of the law which require them to make reports. Violations of such provisions by candidates and committees are punishable either by fines which are sometimes increased if the delay is long continued;<sup>3</sup> by imprisonment in case of willful contumacy; by not printing the name of the candidate on the primary ballot; by refusal to issue certificates of election; or even by invalidating the election of the successful candidate.

<sup>1</sup> L. 1920, chap. 349.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. New York Election Law, art. 16, § 540; Wisconsin, L. 1915, chap. 499, s. 4; Nebraska, L. 1909, chap. 54; U. S. Stat., chap. 392, 61st Cong., 2d sess.

<sup>3</sup> Montana and Oregon, for example, impose fines of \$25 for each day of delay beyond the time set for filing reports.

## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

A few states require that reports be made of contributions of personal service as well as of money. Thus in Florida a primary candidate must include in his final report the names of his political workers and state for what consideration, if any, the work was done.<sup>1</sup> A federal statute also requires candidates for Congress or the Senate to report every promise or pledge made by or for him with his consent, and expressly forbids the promise of offices.<sup>2</sup>

Reports of  
personal  
service

In cases of open scandal over campaign contributions or expenditures it has been the usual practice for candidates to disavow all knowledge or responsibility, throwing the blame entirely upon their campaign managers. One method to break up this alleged moral insulation is suggested by a provision of the New York election law which requires that officers, members or employees of political committees in primary and election campaigns shall within three days, upon demand, and in any event within fourteen days, make a detailed account of all receipts, expenditures, promises or liabilities to the candidate or to the treasurer of the committee.<sup>3</sup>

Establish-  
ing respon-  
sibility

The greatest controversy occasioned by the publicity sections of Corrupt Practices Acts related to the date of filing reports of contributions and expenditures, whether before or after the election. No doubt publicity even after the election, assuming that it is complete, tends to discourage the worst abuses of campaign financing. But if publicity is to have any effect upon the result of the election it must be made available to the public before the end of the campaign. In spite of the unquestioned superiority of pre-election publicity, most of the state laws still specify dates following the election.<sup>4</sup> However, several states

Reports be-  
fore or af-  
ter elections

<sup>1</sup> L. 1913, § 19.

<sup>2</sup> U. S. Stat., chap. 33, 62d Cong., 1st sess.

<sup>3</sup> N. Y. Election Law, art. 16, § 544.

<sup>4</sup> Thus Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming fix dates ranging from five to thirty days after election.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

require pre-election reports, followed, of course, by final statements after the election.<sup>1</sup> New Jersey (L. 1918, ch. 184) requires a periodic accounting from candidates during a period of eight months which must be brought down to date on the Friday or Saturday next preceding the election and completed twenty days afterward. A federal law passed in 1911 required treasurers of political committees to report not more than fifteen nor less than ten days before a congressional election and on each sixth day thereafter until such election, final statement to be made not later than thirty days after election.<sup>2</sup>

Corporate  
contribu-  
tions pro-  
hibited

Corporations, particularly insurance, banking, railroad and franchise corporations, are prohibited from making campaign contributions by most of the existing Corrupt Practices Acts in the various states and by federal laws passed in 1907 and 1909. Penalties include stiff fines for each offense, imprisonment of the responsible officers or agents of the corporation,<sup>3</sup> and in some cases revocation of the charter or permit to do business in the state. Alabama and Louisiana prohibit not only contributions from corporations generally, but also contributions from any person, trustee, or trustees owning or holding the majority stock of the special classes of corporations mentioned above.<sup>4</sup>

Other  
prohibited  
contribu-  
tions

Other kinds of contributions prohibited by the laws of the various states are as follows: contributions from anonymous sources or from persons giving false names;<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thus Alabama, 10-5 days before, 10 after; Florida, 30-25 days prior to primary, also 12-8 days before and within 10 after; Kentucky, 15-10 days before; Minnesota and Utah, the second Saturday after the first disbursement by a candidate and every second Saturday thereafter, and also on the Saturday preceding any election and primary; Nebraska, 15 days before, 20 days after; New Jersey, as above; North Carolina, 10 days before primary, 20 days after; West Virginia, 15-7 days before, 30 days after; Wisconsin, within four days ending on Saturday preceding primary or election and on the Saturday following.

<sup>2</sup> U. S. Stat., chap. 33, 62d Cong., 1st sess.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ohio General Code, 1921, Sec. 13320 *et. seq.*

<sup>4</sup> Alabama, L. 1915, chap. 171; Louisiana, L. 1916, art. 35, § 25.

<sup>5</sup> New York Election Laws, art. 16, § 547; Pennsylvania, L. 1906, chap. 78, § 6.

## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

from holders of public offices other than elective offices,<sup>1</sup> and, in New York, from judicial candidates except for such legal expenses as are authorized.<sup>2</sup> New York also prohibits the use of party funds in aid of any person in a primary election.<sup>3</sup> The New Jersey law requires that contributions must be sent in at least five days before election. Later receipts must be returned to the donors.<sup>4</sup>

## POLITICAL ASSESSMENTS

It will be recalled that among the earlier sources of campaign funds contributions from office holders played a large part. No other source has ever been more thoroughly systematized and administered. While relatively of less importance at the present time because of the development of other and more lucrative sources, the system of political assessments, as it was aptly called, still flourishes widely although more or less surreptitiously. In Philadelphia, where it reached its highest development, it had almost the precision and thoroughness of taxation. Not only was the assessment of each office holder definitely fixed, but the rates employed rose progressively with salaries as follows:

Levying on  
office hold-  
ers

Salary	Rate (per cent)
\$600—\$1,199 .....	3
1,200— 1,999 .....	4½
2,000— 2,999 .....	6
3,000— 5,999 .....	9
6,000 and over .....	12

Approximately 94 per cent of all city employees from the highest to the lowest regularly paid these assessments. It was generally understood throughout the service that failure to pay would result in dismissal. During the ten

<sup>1</sup> Nevada, L. 1915, chap. 376; Olson Oregon Laws, 1920, § 4132.

<sup>2</sup> New York Penal Law, § 780.

<sup>3</sup> New York Election Law, art. 16, § 562.

<sup>4</sup> New Jersey, L. 1918, chap. 184, § 14.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

years preceding 1913 the amounts thus contributed by office holders to Republican campaign funds varied from \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually.<sup>1</sup> No accounting was made regarding the use of these large sums, and there is good reason to believe that a considerable part of the money was transferred to the private purses of certain local bosses. And all of this went merrily on in spite of a law prohibiting political assessments which had been on the statute books of the state ever since 1883.<sup>2</sup>

Political assessment of civil servants

So far as this system was applied to holders of offices of purely political character and tenure it was objectionable chiefly because of its compulsory character. Applied to holders of offices under the merit system it threatens the administrative integrity of that system as a whole. If allowed to continue unchecked, political assessments would ultimately destroy the confidence of the public in the non-partisan character of the civil service. Accordingly civil-service laws and rules generally contain detailed and drastic provisions against solicitation of this sort. While not embodied in Corrupt Practices Acts, these provisions form an important supplement to such acts.

Prohibited by U. S. civil-service law

Under the federal civil-service law solicitation or the use of pressure by officers of the government to obtain political contributions from other officers, clerks, and employees of the government is made punishable by a fine not to exceed five thousand dollars or imprisonment not to exceed three years, or both. The United States Civil Service Commission has taken action repeatedly to enforce this provision. Apparently, however, there is nothing to prevent solicitation by persons other than government officials. Political leaders whose influence rightly or wrongly is feared, but who do not themselves hold public office, may cultivate the appearance of familiarity with higher ad-

<sup>1</sup> For additional details, including facsimiles of records and reports used in collecting political assessments, see M. L. Cooke, *Our Cities Awake*, pp. 34-40; also his report on *Political Assessments in Philadelphia*, privately printed in 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 1883, P. L. 96.

## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

ministrative officials. Requests for "voluntary" contributions from such leaders are likely to be heeded by large numbers of the more timorous employees. The federal law should be amended to prohibit solicitation of civil servants for campaign contributions by any person or campaign committee. Certain state and local civil-service laws contain this provision, which, although often violated, nevertheless makes evasion difficult. It may even prove desirable to forbid absolutely all political contributions from employees under civil-service rules. Meanwhile the absence of civil-service laws in many states and cities opens the door wide to the abuse of political assessments.

Existing civil-service laws generally also forbid various forms of political activity on the part of civil servants. Thus the federal law, while permitting persons in the competitive classified service to vote as they please and to express privately their opinion on all political subjects, prohibits them from taking any active part in political management or in political campaigns. Some of the forms of activity held to be forbidden are as follows: "Candidacy for or service as delegate, alternate, or proxy in any political convention, or as an officer or employee thereof; acting as officer of any political convention or caucus, addressing it, making motions, preparing or assisting in preparing resolutions, representing other persons, or taking any prominent part therein; service on or for any political committee or other similar organization; serving as officer of a political club, as member or officer of any of its committees, addressing such a club, or being active in its organization; service in preparing for, organizing, or conducting a political meeting or rally, addressing such a meeting, or taking any other active part therein except as a spectator; giving public expression to political views, engaging in political discussions or conferences while on duty or in public places, or canvassing a district or soliciting political support for any party, faction, candidate, or measure; offensive activity at the polls at primary or regular elections, soliciting votes, assisting voters to mark ballots, or

Prohibition  
of political  
activity



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

in getting out the voters on registration and election days, acting as accredited checker, watcher, or challenger of any party or faction, assisting in counting the vote, or engaging in any other activity at the polls except marking and depositing the employee's own ballot; serving in any position of election officer; publishing or being connected editorially, managerially, or financially with any political newspaper, and writing for publication or publishing any letter or article, signed or unsigned, in favor of or against any political party, candidate, faction, or measure; activity in campaigns concerning the regulation or suppression of the liquor traffic; candidacy for nomination or election to or holding local office; distribution of campaign literature, badges, or buttons while on duty; the circulation but not the signing of political petitions (including initiative and referendum, recall, and nomination petitions); and general political leadership or becoming prominently identified with any political movement, party, or faction, or with the success or failure of any candidate for election to public office. . . . Those favoring or opposing the cause of woman suffrage are subject to the same rules and restrictions regarding political activity as are applicable to the adherents or opponents of other political causes."<sup>1</sup>

### Limitations on campaign contribu- tions

Twenty-three states have passed laws placing more or less elaborate limitations upon campaign contributions from or expenditures in behalf of candidates. Usually these laws state maximum sums, but in some cases they restrict the candidate to a certain percentage of the salary of the office to which he aspires,<sup>2</sup> while in a few instances he is allowed to use an amount determined by the number of votes cast in the state or district at the election immedi-

<sup>1</sup> *Civil-Service Act, Rules, Statutes and Executive Orders*, 1922, p. 37. See also *Information Concerning Political Assessments and Partisan Activity of Federal Office Holders and Employees*, September, 1920; both published by the Government Printing Office.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Oregon, 15 per cent one year's salary for primary, 10 per cent for election; Michigan, 25 per cent one year's salary for nomination 25 per cent for election.



## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

ately preceding.<sup>1</sup> There are wide variations in the limitations fixed. Thus candidates for United States Senator may contribute not to exceed \$1,500 for nomination in Maine, while in New Jersey they may contribute \$50,000 toward the primary and another \$50,000 for the general election.<sup>2</sup> The Massachusetts law limits campaign expenditures of various candidates, distinguishing between primaries and elections, as follows:

Offices	Primary	Election
United States Senator and Governor .....	\$2,500	\$5,000
Lieutenant-governor, state secretary, state treasurer, attorney-general, representative in Congress .....	1,500	3,000
Representatives in general court, districts electing three .....	300	300
Districts electing two or one..	200	200

For any other office candidates may expend not to exceed twenty dollars for each one thousand or major portion thereof of registered voters in their districts. Massachusetts also limits individual contributions to campaign funds to \$1,000 in any election and primary preliminary thereto.

A federal law of 1910, amended in 1911, provided that candidates for the Senate and House of Representatives should not contribute in excess of the amounts fixed by the laws of their respective states, and, further, that no candidate for Representative should expend more than \$5,000,

**Federal Act  
of 1910 and  
Newberry  
decision**

<sup>1</sup> The limitations in Indiana, Missouri, and Nebraska are based on the number of electors. Indiana allows \$25 per 1,000 voters up to 50,000; \$10 per 1,000 from 50,000 to 100,000; and \$5 per 1,000 over 100,000.

<sup>2</sup> Formerly \$25,000 for the primary and \$25,000 for the election. The increase was made in 1921. L. 1921, chap. 196. Cf. V. J. West, "1921 Legislation respecting Elections," *American Political Science Review*, vol. xvi, p. 464 (Aug., 1922). The same law doubled the permitted expenditures in other cases. Would-be delegates to national conventions from New Jersey may now spend \$10,000 each for election! Cf. R. S. Boots, "Trend of the Direct Primary," *ibid.*, vol. xvi, p. 415 (Aug., 1922).

and no candidate for the Senate more than \$10,000 for nomination and election, exclusive of necessary personal expenses.<sup>1</sup> In the Newberry case, however, the Supreme Court decided that, whatever its constitutional powers to regulate the manner of holding elections, Congress was given no authority to control party primaries or conventions.<sup>2</sup> Of course the various states may legislate on primaries, including limitations upon campaign funds used therein, but such efforts are likely to lack uniformity in the future as in the past.

Candidates'  
contribu-  
tions

In a few Southern states party committees are authorized by law to collect from candidates a small fixed sum or percentage of the salary of the office to which they aspire—this as “an evidence of the good faith of the candidates and an expense fund of the several political parties,” as the Mississippi statute phrases it.<sup>3</sup> In too many instances the limitations upon campaign contributions and assessments from candidates are weakened by provisions allowing them to pay personal and other expenses such as for postage, telegrams, telephone messages, stationery, letters, printing, expressage, traveling, and hotel bills. Primarily, the purpose of such limitations is to prevent the use of money by wealthy candidates to excessive amounts, but they also serve the purpose of protecting poorer candidates from exorbitant demands made by party committees. The latter purpose is also evident in a number of restrictions upon expenditures by candidates which will be mentioned later.

Lists of le-  
gitimate  
expendi-  
tures

Nearly all the more recent Corrupt Practices Acts contain lists of legitimate forms of campaign expenditures. For the most part these lists are generously long and, inter-

<sup>1</sup> U. S. Stat., chap. 392, 61st Cong., 2d sess.; chap. 33, 62d Cong., 1st sess.

<sup>2</sup> *Truman H. Newberry et al. vs. U. S.*, decided May 2, 1921. See also *The Searchlight* of January 31, 1922, on the Newberry case.

<sup>3</sup> Mississippi, R. S. 1909, § 5860, \$100 for state office, \$50 for Congress, \$5 for state representative or county office; Florida, R. S. 1920, § 324, 2 per cent of annual salary of office; North Carolina, L. 1917, chap. 218, \$50 for Congress, \$20 for state offices, \$5 for state senator. Cf. also Indiana, L. 1913, chap. 180.

## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

preted liberally, would permit very large disbursements. Some amusing distinctions are made, as in Massachusetts, which permits "refreshments, not including intoxicating liquors, but including cigars and tobacco."<sup>1</sup> The Indiana law specifies that all payments "shall be made at a rate which is reasonably and fairly commensurate with the service rendered."<sup>2</sup>

Lists of illegitimate forms of expenditure are shorter and more fragmentary. Among the forbidden forms are treating to cigars, tobacco, liquors, clothing, meat, drink, or entertainment; contributions to religious, charitable, fraternal and other organizations supposed to be primarily for the public good, unless the candidate has been in the habit of supporting these organizations for six months before his nomination; purchase of tickets to balls, picnics, fairs, and entertainments, payment for space in any book, program, periodical, paper or publication, business advertisements excepted.<sup>3</sup>

Lists of illegitimate expenditures

Acting on the assumption that the most indefensible expenditures are those made on election day, a number of states have prohibited or limited such expenditures in drastic fashion. Thus Kansas makes it unlawful "to hire or to lend, or pay or promise to pay any money, or to give or to promise to give anything of value to any person to work at the polls on any election day in the interest of any party, or any ticket, or any candidate or candidates."<sup>4</sup> Minnesota has a similar provision with exception made for the hiring of challengers.<sup>5</sup> Alabama, Montana, and Oregon prohibit the solicitation of votes on election day,<sup>6</sup> and

Expenditures on election day

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also the lists given in the New York Election Law, art. 16, § 767; and in the Pennsylvania Act of 1906, § 4, P. L. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Burns Annotated Indiana Statutes, 1914, vol. iii, p. 578.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Olson Oregon Laws, 1920, § 4138; Alabama, L. 1915, chap. 171; Louisiana, L. 1916, chap. 35; New Jersey, L. 1918, chap. 184, § 36; New York Penal Laws, § 779.

<sup>4</sup> Kansas, L. 1893, chap. 77, § 2. A Wisconsin provision is equally drastic, cf. L. 1915, chap. 499, § 14.

<sup>5</sup> Minnesota, L. 1912, chap. 3, § 13.

<sup>6</sup> Alabama, L. 1915, chap. 171; Montana, Rev. Code 1921, vol. iv, § 10799; Oregon, Olson, 1920, §§ 4143-4145.

a Michigan law contains a drastic clause the express intent of which is "to prohibit the prevailing practice of candidates hiring with money and promises of positions, etc., workers on primary day and prior thereto."<sup>1</sup> Several states limit the number of conveyances that may be used to bring voters to the polls. Thus Massachusetts allows at each polling place not more than one conveyance and not more than two persons to represent each party. New York allows not more than three carriages for each election district. Exceptions are made by some states in favor of sick and crippled voters, but Nevada provides carriages so employed shall have "neither banner nor worker upon them." New Jersey forbids the hiring of vehicles to transport voters, but private persons may volunteer to do so. Chairmen of county committees may petition the county court in case voters who live two miles from the polls have no transportation, and the judge may order transportation furnished and paid by the board of freeholders of the county in such cases. New Jersey, Minnesota, and Montana prohibit the use of political badges, buttons, and insignia at the polls.

Regulation  
of news-  
paper pub-  
licity

A few Corrupt Practices Acts attempt to restrain various abuses of newspaper publicity. Alabama, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Wisconsin require all political advertisements to be signed, the provision of the latter being that all such matter shall be marked "Paid Advertisement," with a statement at the head of the amount to be paid therefor, name and address of the candidate in whose behalf the matter is inserted, and of other persons, if any, authorizing the publication, and the name of the author thereof.<sup>2</sup> Also in Alabama, Missouri, and Wisconsin campaign literature other than newspaper materials must disclose the names of the author and candidate. Candidates who own newspapers in Kansas must take into

<sup>1</sup> Howell's Michigan Statutes, i, § 549, p. 359, L. 1913, chap. 118.

<sup>2</sup> Wisconsin, L. 1913, § 94; 1915, chap. 499, § 15; 1917, chap. 566, § 10. Alabama includes political cartoons under a similar provision, L. 1915, chap. 171, §§ 9, 11. Cf. also Missouri, Rev. Stat. 1919, § 5048.

## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

account all personal references at the same rate as charged other candidates.<sup>1</sup> In Minnesota such candidates must report the fact of their ownership to the state auditor.<sup>2</sup> Wisconsin also requires a report from owners of any financial interest in newspapers who hold office under the state or local governments thereof in case they publish any campaign matter except paid advertisements marked as such. Four states prohibit the purchase of newspaper support by candidates, one of them—Massachusetts—imposing a fine of not to exceed \$10,000 for this offense.<sup>3</sup> New York, on the other hand, makes the solicitation of money from a candidate for newspaper support a misdemeanor.

The use by employers of pay envelopes for purposes of political suggestion or intimidation is prohibited in New Jersey and Oregon.<sup>4</sup> Also in both states employers are forbidden to post placards about their premises within ninety days of an election, stating that work will cease, or the establishment be closed, or wages reduced under certain political contingencies. Corporations violating this provision may be punished by the forfeiture of their charters.

**Suggestion  
or intimi-  
dation by  
employers**

Limitations of the total amount to be expended in any one campaign or year are much less common than limitations upon the contributions of candidates. Of course the latter must tend to reduce considerably the total sum available for expenditure, especially in primary campaigns. However, Nevada has a blanket limitation as follows: "No political party in any campaign in this state through its managing committees or otherwise shall pay, distribute, or expend any sum of money, or incur, authorize or permit any expenses or liabilities in excess of the sum of fifteen thousand dollars."<sup>5</sup> And in New Hampshire state com-

**Limita-  
tions of  
total expen-  
ditures**

<sup>1</sup> L. 1915, chap. 211.

<sup>2</sup> L. 1912, chap. 3.

<sup>3</sup> The four are Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Kansas, however, expressly exempts the outright purchase of a newspaper or periodical. L. 1911, chap. 137.

<sup>4</sup> New Jersey, L. 1918, chap. 184, § 45; Oregon, Olson 1920, § 2060. Cf. also Wisconsin, L. 1915, chap. 499, § 20.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. Laws, 1919, vol. iii, p. 2724.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

mittees are limited to \$25,000 in any one year, not more than one half of which is to be paid for traveling political agents and for contributions to local committees.<sup>1</sup>

Placing  
campaign  
expendi-  
tures on the  
state

It has been suggested at various times that the problem of campaign contributions might be solved by the assumption of the financial burdens involved by the state. President Roosevelt discussed this matter in his message to Congress, December, 1907.<sup>2</sup> In 1909, Colorado passed a law providing that the state appropriate twenty-five cents for each vote cast at the preceding contest for governor, the money to be divided between the state chairmen of the parties in proportion to the vote of each, half of it to be apportioned by the state chairmen among the county chairmen. Under the law no other campaign contributions were to be legal, except from candidates to the extent of 25 per cent of their first year's salary. However, this novel Colorado experiment was pronounced unconstitutional in the case of *McDonald vs. Galligan*.

Expenses  
now met by  
state

While the one effort to solve the problem in this thoroughgoing fashion failed, the states have assumed, as a matter of fact, large financial burdens formerly imposed upon candidates and parties, for example, by printing official ballots and by paying the costs of holding primary elections. Although the aggregate costs thus taken over by the government are heavy, the parties, as noted above, have nevertheless discovered methods of spending constantly increasing sums.

### PUBLICITY PAMPHLETS

Measures  
pamphlets  
and candi-  
dates pam-  
phlets

One method of transferring part of the cost of campaigning to the state—the publicity pamphlet—deserves special mention. The publicity pamphlet exists in two forms, one used in connection with the initiative and referendum, which may best be described as the measures

<sup>1</sup> L. 1915, chap. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the author's *Corruption in American Politics and Life*, p. 221, for a discussion of this suggestion.

## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

pamphlet, and the other, used in ordinary primaries and elections, as the candidates pamphlet. The latter is an outgrowth of the former, and was first adopted by Oregon in 1908. Subsequently, six other states passed laws providing for candidates pamphlets, but in none of them has the institution taken root.<sup>1</sup> The Oregon law requires all candidates in primaries and elections to purchase at fixed rates not less than one nor more than four pages of space in a pamphlet to be published and mailed to all registered voters by the secretary of state. The rates vary from fifty dollars to one hundred dollars per page for state-wide offices, lower rates being granted for district and county candidates. Candidates may fill the space with their portraits, platforms, and such arguments as they wish to offer. Persons desiring to oppose candidates may also purchase space for that purpose, subject to due notice to the persons attacked and also to the law of libel.

Publicity pamphlets of both forms were advocated originally as a highly desirable addition to the existing means of educating the electorate. As such they are doubtless better adapted to sparsely settled states than to those well supplied by metropolitan newspapers. The candidates pamphlet was advocated by the People's Power League of Oregon on the special ground that it would "give poor men an equal chance with the men who are supported by wealth in aspiring for nomination and election to public office." In practice the measures pamphlet has won for itself far wider extension and use than the candidates pamphlet, although the latter continues to be an interesting and influential feature of primaries and elections in Oregon. The Wyoming law did not make it compulsory upon candidates to purchase space and none did so during the eight years it remained upon the statute

Educational  
effects of  
publicity  
pamphlets

<sup>1</sup> Montana, 1909, repealed 1919; Wyoming, 1911, repealed 1919; Florida, North Dakota, and Colorado, 1913, but in the latter the law was enacted subject to the repeal of a constitutional provision in conflict with it which has not been done; and, finally, South Dakota, primary law of 1918, repealed 1921.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

book, a fact which seems to argue lack of confidence in the utility of the pamphlet as a means of campaign advertising. According to a recent study of publicity pamphlets generally, mud-slinging was never resorted to by candidates, and opponents of candidates did not avail themselves of the opportunity to buy space. "Each aspirant presents his best photograph, recounts those events in his life of which he is most proud or which are most likely to attract votes, and presents a set of the most carefully phrased, all-inclusive, noncommittal platform planks possible. The customary 'economy, efficiency, honesty' trio is much overworked."<sup>1</sup> In general the official candidates pamphlets are inferior to the pamphlets sometimes issued by Voters' Leagues and other nonpartisan bodies which omit photographs and present all essential facts, whether good or bad, in the records of candidates.

### Defects of Corrupt Practices Acts

Existing Corrupt Practices Acts leave much to be desired. While only a few states are without them, the legislation of the great majority is fragmentary. The situation would be materially improved if these backward states adopted the standards of the more progressive commonwealths, particularly in such matters as pre-election publicity, limitation of contributions from candidates and others, and restriction of eleventh-hour expenditures. It is much to be desired that the safeguards swept away by the Supreme Court decision in the Newberry case be restored by state legislation, particularly since Congress has not seen fit to make use of such constitutional powers as were left to it under that decision. Evasion of most existing laws is possible at numerous points and administration is usually slipshod unless aroused by some blazing scandal. It must be conceded that all our Corrupt Practices Acts have not prevented the increase of campaign funds in general. Wealthy candidates, candidates who by any means can secure newspaper publicity, or candidates who can draw upon the financial resources and personal ser-

<sup>1</sup> Richard W. Slocum, *Publicity Pamphlets*, a study prepared for the Department of Political Science, Swarthmore College, 1922.

## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

vices of the organization, still enjoy advantages which frequently make competition seem hopeless.

### Socialist Party of America

State .....

Local .....

Branch .....

### MEMBERSHIP CARD

Name .....

Address .....

Admitted ..... 19...

No. .... Page .....

.....

Secretary

Address .....

ISSUED BY AUTHORITY OF THE

National Executive Committee

220 So. Ashland Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

### YEAR 19



Feb.

Mar.

April

May

June

July

Aug.

Sept.

Oct.

Nov.

Dec.

### YEAR 19

Jan.

Feb.

Mar.

April

May

June

July

Aug.

Sept.

Oct.

Nov.

Dec.

### MEMBERSHIP CARD AND DUES STAMP: SOCIALIST PARTY

Both the major political parties have presented brief platform planks dealing with corporate contributions and publicity of campaign contributions.<sup>1</sup> Naturally that party

<sup>1</sup> Cf. planks in national platforms as follows: Democratic, 1908, 1912, and 1920; Republican, 1912.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Platform  
planks: So-  
cialist dues  
stamps

or faction which feels itself at a disadvantage nationally or locally in "getting the money" takes the stronger position on this issue. The Socialists alone may claim credit for a satisfactory solution of the problem of party finance. Their national committee sells monthly dues stamps to the state committees at the rate of ten cents each; the state committees sell them to the county or city organizations at an advance of fifteen cents; and so on down, until they reach the individual party members, who affix them to a membership card, which serves as conclusive evidence of their good standing at all times. Thus the rank and file of that party contribute steadily at the rate of fifty cents per month, making up a fund considerable in the aggregate. By the dues-stamp device this fund is divided with a minimum of accounting between the local, state and national committees.<sup>1</sup>

Effective-  
ness of  
Corrupt  
Practices  
Acts

In spite of legislative incompleteness, administrative neglect and party indifference there is reason to believe that Corrupt Practices Acts have accomplished a considerable amount of good. The publicity requirements have decidedly stimulated the interest of voters in campaign finance. As a result shady transactions which could easily have been kept under cover two or three decades ago now stand a fair chance of exposure. Limitations upon contributions, while not sufficiently menacing to procure compliance in all cases, are, nevertheless, very unpleasant to reckon with legally or at the bar of public opinion in those cases where the facts are discovered. It is worth recalling that the very promising candidacies of Governor Lowden and General Wood before the Republican national conven-

<sup>1</sup> *National Constitution of the Socialist Party, as Amended by the Detroit Convention*, June, 1921, art. ix, § 6. "Exempt stamps," not to exceed 10 per cent of the total number, are issued for members out of work because of sickness, strikes, lockouts, or other conditions not within their control. A double perforated stamp is also sold, one half to be affixed to the membership card of the husband, the other half to that of the wife. In addition to the sales of dues stamps there are frequent calls for voluntary contributions. Cf. J. W. Hughan, *American Socialism of the Present Day*, p. 204; Spargo and Arner, *Elements of Socialism*, p. 298.



## CAMPAIGN FUNDS

tion of 1920 were wrecked largely because of the revelation of lavish expenditures in their interest. Thus even in cases not covered by law the existence of higher standards of public morality may sometimes be made manifest.

## BOOK NOTES

THE work of the Kenyon Committee is summed up in \* *Senate Report No. 883, 66th Cong., 3d Session* (Washington, 1921). This admirably brief but comprehensive statement is based upon twenty-two volumes of testimony. Valuable discussions of campaign funds may also be found in H. J. Ford, *Rise and Growth of American Politics*, Ch. XXIV (1900); P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics*, Ch. XI (1917), and article by the same author in *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.* 13:272 (May, 1919); and C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*, pp. 329-42 (1922). For details on the earlier development of Corrupt Practices Acts the student may consult the author's *Corruption in American Politics and Life*, Ch. VI (1910). H. Croly, *Marcus Alonzo Hanna*, Chs. XVI and XXI (1912), presents an extremely illuminating critical account of the financial operations on the Republican side during the campaigns of 1896 and 1900.

On English Corrupt Practices Acts and their political effects the student should consult the excellent brief account presented by A. L. Lowell, *The Government of England*, Vol. I, pp. 221-238 (1908).

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ELECTORATE

Suffrage  
and sov-  
ereignty

IN an autocracy the ruler has only to make up his own mind to determine the will of the state. In narrow aristocracies or oligarchies it is also a comparatively simple matter to ascertain the will of the small group of rulers. But with the extension of political power to masses of people in a democracy "there can be," as Montesquieu points out, "no exercise of sovereignty but by their (the people's) suffrages, which are their own will. Now the sovereign's will is the sovereign himself. The laws, therefore, which establish the right of suffrage are fundamental to this government. And indeed it is as important to regulate in a republic, in what manner, by whom, to whom, and concerning what suffrages are to be given, as it is in a monarchy to know who is the prince, and after what manner he ought to govern."<sup>1</sup>

Who shall  
vote

Historically four principal answers have been given to the most fundamental of these questions: by whom are suffrages to be given, which, of course, involves the further question, who shall be debarred from suffrage?<sup>2</sup> Among Greeks and Romans the right to vote (1) was considered to belong to all citizens as a necessary accompaniment to their membership in the state. It must be remembered, however, that citizenship itself was narrowly restricted even in the most democratic of ancient states. During the Middle Ages men voted (2) because of the lands or titles they held. The French Revolution promulgated with tremendous force a doctrine which had long

<sup>1</sup> *Spirit of Laws*, translated by T. Nugent, bk. ii, chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> C. Seymour and D. P. Frary, *How the World Votes*, chap. i.

## THE ELECTORATE

been forming under the influence of Catholic schoolmen and of reformed sects—namely (3) that the right to vote was one of the essential rights of man as such. While no longer accepted by students of political science, this doctrine was of prime importance in securing the extension of suffrage to larger and larger masses of people in the latter part of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century.

At the present time political scientists generally regard suffrage not as a natural right, but (4) as a right conferred by law in the discretion of the state, which may widen or curtail it if the highest interests of the state so require. From the voter's point of view, the exercise of suffrage thus becomes a duty which he is presumed to perform in the service of the state. Like the member of a legislature, the voter may be considered to hold an office under the state, although, of course, it is true that the duties connected with the voter's office need not occupy much of his time.

Voting as a  
duty, or of-  
fice

Collectively all those who possess the right of suffrage are called the electorate. In its widest sense the electorate may be defined as "that part of the people of a state who are legally qualified to declare their will authoritatively with respect to matters constitutionally reserved to them."<sup>1</sup> Suffrage is sometimes distinguished as active—*i.e.*, the right of voting for candidates—and passive—*i.e.*, the right to be voted for. Formerly eligibility to office and voting were both made dependent upon property holding and other general qualifications. Usually these qualifications were considerably higher for office holding than for voting. Under such circumstances it was natural to distinguish between actual and passive suffrage. With the disappearance of most of these general tests of eligibility, however, the distinction is well-nigh obsolete. In current speech the word is almost invariably used in the active sense, and will be so used in this discussion.

Electorate,  
active and  
passive suf-  
frage

Considering suffrage as a public duty and a public trust,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States*, p. 143.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Ideal qualifications for suffrage

in short, as a kind of limited public office, it is not difficult to state broadly the qualifications upon which it should be based. Indeed, these should differ only in degree, not in kind, from the qualifications deemed essential in office holders whose duties are more continuous and numerous. For our own country the ideal standards of suffrage have been stated as follows: "(1) loyalty to the fundamental principles of American government; (2) willingness to use the vote, according to one's conscience, for the best good of the commonwealth without fear or favor; and (3) a reasonable degree of political intelligence."<sup>1</sup>

Legal tests

Apart from radicals, such standards would be generally accepted. It is, however, one thing to state the ideal qualifications for voting, but another and quite different thing to formulate legal tests capable of precise application to masses of the people—tests which definitely admit certain persons and exclude all others. Thus loyalty, conscientiousness, intelligence, although admittedly most desirable qualifications, could scarcely be defined in terms acceptable to all, nor could their possession to the requisite degree be easily determined on the part of applicants for suffrage. No school certificate or diploma, for example, is proof positive of intelligence. And demonstrated intelligence to the necessary degree may co-exist with disloyalty or venality.

Lower voting qualifications; consequences

During the nineteenth century the actual requirements for suffrage both in western Europe and in the United States were reduced to a comparatively few minimum standards, capable of prompt and precise application by administrative officers. With every enlargement of the electorate thus occasioned prophecies of dire disaster were freely made, principally by those who anticipated the loss of their aristocratic, ecclesiastical, or economic privileges. But there were also more disinterested warnings from philosophers who feared the destruction of civilization by

<sup>1</sup> Holcombe *op. cit.*, p. 155. Cf. Jefferson's simple test for an office holder: "Is he honest? Is he capable? Is he faithful to the Constitution?" J. A. Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems*, p. 256.

## THE ELECTORATE

"barbarians from within."<sup>1</sup> It must be admitted that these forebodings were not wholly without foundation. Our political reactions to the foreign-born and negro voter show the difficulties involved in large additions of inferior elements to the electorate. Nevertheless, disaster has not resulted from any of these extensions of the suffrage, nor, so far, from the process as a whole. Of course the sweeping application of lower voting qualifications to people whose social standards were retrograding would have made of elections the political farces or tragedies they have become in San Domingo or the more backward Latin-American countries. But the classes actually admitted to the electorate from time to time in western Europe and the United States were advancing in the economic and educational scale. Because of these advances and supported by them, they demanded a share of political power. In the struggle to gain it, and afterward in exercising it, they acquired some at least of the ideal qualities desirable in an electorate.

To a large degree, therefore, the process by which the electorate was widened in western Europe and in the United States reconciled the divergent theories on the subject. The revolutionary theory that suffrage was one of the natural rights of man provided the end toward which progress was made, while the theories demanding certain tests of citizenship, property, intelligence, or virtue were satisfied by the general diffusion of education and economic well-being. It is no doubt true that the first of these theories has been pushed more rapidly than the second—in other words, that suffrage has been widened more rapidly than the qualifications for using it properly have been acquired. Intelligence tests, as is well known, revealed lamentably large percentages of persons of inferior mentality among our soldiers during the World War. In

Intelligence  
tests

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Thomas Carlyle, *Shooting Niagara and After*, and, as a contemporary illustration, C. J. Cannon, "Democracy in Question," *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. cxxix, p. 145 (Feb., 1922). The reader may also consult with profit W. McDougal, *Is America Safe for Democracy?* although it does not take up the subject of suffrage directly.



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all probability similar tests would give much the same results if applied to our electorate as a whole. However, psychologists disagree widely as to the significance and value of the percentages thus obtained. Until more definite conclusions are reached in this field of research one is scarcely justified in predicting the downfall of democracy because of the alleged large proportion of morons in modern electorates.<sup>1</sup> Yet the situation is disquieting, even taking the lowest possible estimate of the value of intelligence tests. One of the most incisive critics of the results obtained by such tests, nevertheless, concludes that "it is now, as it has never been before, a 'race between education and annihilation.' If education is to save civilization it must lift the common man to new levels—and not so much to new levels of industrial efficiency as to new levels of thinking and feeling."<sup>2</sup>

Increased  
powers of  
electorate

At the same time that the electorate was being widened in the United States the number of duties assigned it, and consequently its powers, grew rapidly. In Europe the general tendency has been to limit direct popular election to legislative offices only, using other methods to fill judicial and executive offices. The fathers of our federal Constitution began with the same idea—indeed, they provided for popular election of only one of the two houses of Congress. Yet their attempt to keep the election of the President away from the direct influence of the voters soon proved futile, and in 1913, by the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution the election of United States Senators was taken out of the hands of state legislatures and placed in the hands of the state electorates. The extension of the powers of the electorate to the choice not only of executive but of judicial officers as well, made rapid progress both in state and local government following the advent of Jacksonian Democracy. A further sweeping extension of the powers of the electorate began with the

<sup>1</sup> C. J. Cannon, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> W. C. Bagley, "Educational Determinism; or Democracy and the I. Q.," *School and Society*, vol. xv, p. 373 (April 8, 1922).

## THE ELECTORATE

introduction of direct-primary legislation in 1890, whereby the electorate took over the duty of making nominations. Finally the introduction of the initiative, referendum, and recall have imposed still further duties upon the electorate.

The underlying purpose of all these additions to the functions of the electorate was to increase the power of the people. If voters had possessed the intelligence, and had been willing to give the time and energy requisite to the proper performance of their new duties, doubtless this purpose would have been achieved. But it is futile to expect too much from the great masses now enfranchised. Many of our voters are called to the polls twice a year, whereas in European countries generally they vote only every two, four, or more years. Our ballots have become large and cumbersome affairs, unlike the short and simple ballots used abroad. Under the circumstances it is not strange that we begin to hear more of the "burden of the ballot" than of the "privilege of the franchise." Confronted with these additional duties, many voters abstain from voting, many others servilely accept the guidance of party leaders. Too often elections register the voice of the boss, not the voice of the people.

"Burden of  
the ballot"

Turning now to the actual development of suffrage in the United States, the history of the country may be divided into three periods: (1) from the Adoption of the Federal Constitution to the Civil War, during which white manhood suffrage was gradually established; (2) from the Civil War to 1890, which was dominated by the bitter struggle over negro suffrage; and (3) from 1890 to the present time, which witnessed the triumph of the woman-suffrage cause.<sup>1</sup>

Suffrage  
history of  
the United  
States

<sup>1</sup> Valuable brief historical accounts of suffrage are presented by F. W. Blackmar, "The History of Suffrage," *Chautauquan*, vol. xxii, p. 28 (1895); and F. N. Thorpe, "A Century's Struggle for the Franchise in America," *Harpers*, vol. xciv, p. 207 (Jan., 1897). Monographs and longer works on the subject are cited in the Book Notes at the end of this chapter.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## SUFFRAGE FROM 1789 TO 1860

### ESTABLISHMENT OF WHITE MANHOOD SUFFRAGE

Suffrage in  
the thirteen  
original  
states

At the adoption of the federal Constitution considerable diversity existed in the suffrage laws of the thirteen original states, taxpaying, freehold or other property qualifications in various amounts being generally required, with occasionally a religious test in addition.<sup>1</sup> These qualifications produced something far short of manhood suffrage as in the North only about three fourths and in the South somewhat less than one half the adult males were qualified to vote.<sup>2</sup> For the most part the wage-earning classes were excluded. The nearest approach to manhood suffrage was in Vermont, which in its constitution of 1777 stipulated that every freeman might vote "who has a sufficient interest in the community." A freeman's oath also was exacted as follows: "I solemnly swear, by the ever-living God (or affirm in the presence of Almighty God), that whenever I am called to give my vote or suffrage, touching any matter that concerns the State of Vermont, I will do it so, as in my conscience, I shall judge will most conduce to the best good of the same, as established by the constitution, without fear or favor of any man."

Considering the diversity of suffrage qualifications in the original states and the consequent impossibility of

<sup>1</sup> For early property qualifications see tables, pp. 12, 13, in Porter, *op. cit.* Immediately before the Revolution Catholics were excluded from suffrage in Rhode Island, Virginia, and Maryland. In New York the letter of the law excluded Jews and Catholics, but there seems to have been no strict enforcement of this provision. Religious tests, at least all those of a sectarian character, had disappeared by 1810.

<sup>2</sup> Interesting figures on the proportion of voters to the total population in the earlier years of New York's statehood may be found in the "Constitution and Government of the State of New York," No. 61, *Bureau of Municipal Research, New York, 1915*. In this state, as in others of the original thirteen, higher property qualifications were exacted to vote for governor, lieutenant-governor, and state senators than to vote for assemblymen, and minor office holders. This special privilege which worked to the advantage of the landowning class was abolished by the Constitution of 1821.

## THE ELECTORATE

agreeing upon any uniform plan, it is not remarkable that the fathers of the federal Constitution avoided the subject. By providing that members of the House of Representatives—the only federal elective office at the time—should be chosen by electors in each state who “shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislature,” the whole subject of suffrage was left in the hands of the states. Thus, as the Supreme Court stated, “the Constitution of the United States does not confer the right of suffrage upon anyone, and . . . the United States have no voters of their own creation.”<sup>1</sup> Nor do the two suffrage amendments to the Constitution, the fifteenth and the nineteenth, confer the right of suffrage upon anyone. Both of them merely seek to prevent the denial of voting rights by any state or by the United States on certain grounds.

Federal  
Constitu-  
tion leaves  
suffrage to  
states

Left thus to their own devices, the states made very considerable extensions to the suffrage during the period from the adoption of the Constitution to the Civil War. Jeffersonian thought and Jacksonian victories, particularly in the new Western commonwealths, ushered in these changes. The fierce party competition of the time led to a continuous reaching out for new voters. Reformers of the period frequently invoked the natural-rights theory. Frontier communities could not be expected to view with complacency property qualifications which disfranchised artisans and laborers who nevertheless built up the state with their brawn and skill and defended it against Indian forays with their muskets. Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee came into the Union before the end of the eighteenth century with white manhood suffrage practically established in their constitutions, and the states of the old Northwest and Southwest followed their example in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. Economic motives reinforced political motives in these western extensions of the suffrage. The new Western states desired nothing so much as a rapid growth of population. To the

Frontier  
and suf-  
frage

<sup>1</sup> *Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 162.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

lure of cheap lands they added the offer of the right to vote to the disfranchised masses of the Atlantic seaboard. The result was a series of extensions of the suffrage in the Eastern states, Massachusetts admitting all poll-tax paying citizens in 1820, New York granting suffrage to all white male citizens in 1826. By 1860, manhood suffrage, confined, of course, to adult male whites, was approximately established throughout the states of the Union.

In one conspicuous instance the movement was pushed too far, with consequences that long remained to trouble the states concerned. So great was the desire for population and development in the west that a number of the new constitutions and suffrage laws in that section included not only all adult male citizens, but also aliens, in some cases even those aliens who had not made declaration of their intent to become naturalized.<sup>1</sup> As late as 1894 this condition prevailed in fifteen states.<sup>2</sup> It is, of course, impossible to defend the admission to suffrage of aliens whose loyalty still belongs legally to foreign sovereignties. A minor consequence of this condition was that many foreigners who were allowed to vote upon taking out their first papers naturally assumed that no further steps were necessary. As a result both they and their children legally remained aliens, sometimes not discovering the fact until they found themselves without protection in foreign countries. Beginning about 1900, however, a strong reaction set in against the admission of foreigners to suffrage, and this reaction was materially strengthened by the World War. Indiana and Texas abandoned the practice in 1921. At the present time only two states—Arizona and Missouri—retain such provisions, and it is safe to predict

<sup>1</sup> In 1856 the American (Know-Nothing) Platform criticized "granting to unnaturalized foreigners the right of suffrage in Kansas and Nebraska." T. H. McKee, *National Conventions and Platforms*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin. Cf. J. Q. Dealey, *American State Constitutions*, p. 150; Ogg and Ray, *Introduction to American Government*, p. 203.



## THE ELECTORATE

that they will be dropped at the first revision of their constitutions.

### SUFFRAGE FROM 1860 TO 1890

#### THE STRUGGLE OVER NEGRO SUFFRAGE<sup>1</sup>

The manhood suffrage which had been established throughout the United States prior to 1860 was, as noted above, essentially white manhood suffrage. During this period there was no effective agitation even in the North for the enfranchisement of free negroes. Indeed, such changes as were made in the suffrage laws were unfavorable to persons of color.<sup>2</sup> At the outbreak of the Civil War they were allowed to vote in but four states—Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. At that time the colored population of these states was less than one half of 1 per cent of the total.

Unfavorable attitude toward negro suffrage prior to 1860

In the heat of reconstruction politics the Fifteenth

<sup>1</sup> On negro suffrage in Southern states the following references are recommended: S. B. Weeks, "History of Negro Suffrage," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. ix, p. 671 (Dec., 1894); A. B. Hart, "Realities of Negro Suffrage," *Am. Pol. Sci. Assoc. Proc.*, vol. ii, p. 149 (1905); J. C. Rose, "Negro Suffrage; the Constitutional Question," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. i, p. 17 (Nov., 1906); and R. S. Baker, "Negro Suffrage in a Democracy," *Atlantic*, vol. cvi, p. 612 (Nov., 1910). For the Southern White viewpoint consult E. G. Murphy, *Problems of the Present South*, chap. vi (1904); J. B. Knox, "Reduction of Representation in the South," *Outlook*, vol. lxxix, p. 169 (Jan. 21, 1905); F. G. Guffey, "Suffrage Limitations at the South," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xx, p. 53 (March, 1905); and J. L. W. Woodville, "Suffrage Limitations in Louisiana," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xxi, p. 177 (June, 1906). The negro viewpoint is presented by W. H. Smith, "Is the Negro Disfranchised?" *Outlook*, vol. lxxix, p. 1047 (April 29, 1905); and W. E. B. Dubois, "Social Effects of Emancipation," *Survey*, Feb. 1, 1913, p. 570.

<sup>2</sup> In five of the original thirteen states—Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, and North Carolina—free negroes who possessed the property or other qualifications required were permitted to vote. Of course very few negroes were able to qualify. Later North Carolina (1835) and New Jersey (1844) disfranchised negroes altogether, and in 1826 New York adopted a constitutional amendment which abolished property qualifications for whites, but retained them in full force for persons of color. Five states in addition to those named above admitted negroes to the franchise prior to 1860—Vermont, Kentucky, Maine, Rhode Island, and Tennessee—but in 1799 Kentucky, and in 1834 Tennessee, withdrew this privilege. Cf. A. N. Holcombe, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

### Fifteenth Amend- ment

Amendment to the Constitution was adopted (1870), providing that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." The attempt thus made to compel the enfranchisement of the colored race has failed throughout the South generally. It is commonly estimated that in most of the states of that section not more than one negro in a hundred votes even at the most important elections.<sup>1</sup>

### Violence and intimi- dation

A wide diversity of means has been employed to bring about this result. In the early stages of the struggle extra-legal and illegal methods were frankly resorted to on a large scale. Violence and intimidation were employed, particularly by the Ku-Klux Klan, to keep negroes from the polls. "Moral suasion," repeating, ballot-box seizures, and ballot-box stuffing were used in those cases where the blacks had to be permitted to vote. Broadly, the Southern whites felt that not simply racial supremacy, but civilization itself, was at stake, and in this cause they did not hesitate at election crimes to secure the higher ends involved.

### Legal ef- forts to dis- franchise negroes

Always, however, there was grave disquiet over the anomalous means employed and, beginning about 1890, efforts were made to secure negro disfranchisement by legal enactments. All the latter, of course, had to steer clear of the Fifteenth Amendment and the laws passed by Congress to enforce it. The Mississippi constitution of 1890<sup>2</sup> bristled with clauses which, taken collectively, it was hoped, would freely admit whites but disqualify the great mass of negroes. First, the residence requirement was raised to two years in the state and one in the election district in order to exclude the large nomadic colored population that was continually shifting from one plantation to another. Second, disqualification was made a penalty

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Rose, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 241. Held by the U. S. Supreme Court in 1892 and 1898 not to violate the Fifteenth Amendment.

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for a long list of offenses, including most of those for which negroes were most commonly convicted, such as bribery, burglary, theft, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretenses, perjury, and bigamy. Third, payment of all taxes was required, including a poll tax of two dollars which might be increased by the board of supervisors of any county to three dollars. To this requirement the ingenious proviso was added that no criminal proceedings could be employed to enforce payment, frankly in the expectation that short of criminal proceedings few if any negroes would ever pay so large a sum merely to qualify as voters. As a matter of fact, negroes desirous of demonstrating their superior cleverness did pay such taxes occasionally. To meet this situation it was arranged that the poll taxes should be collected a year before the date of the election. Few negroes possessed the means and the foresight to obtain the coveted receipts so far in advance. In the cases of those who did, every possible device was employed to secure the surrender of the coveted receipts, among them the sudden advent of a traveling circus in a black-belt town, and the generous offer of the management to accept tax receipts in lieu of coin of the realm for tickets of admission. Fourth, the would-be voter was required either to read any section of the constitution or to give a reasonable explanation of the same when read to him, and in general to possess a satisfactory knowledge of the duties of citizenship.<sup>1</sup>

Since the election officials who had to pass upon these intellectual accomplishments were white, it was doubtful

<sup>1</sup> Similar requirements as to understanding or good character were part of temporary plans in effect in Alabama, South Carolina, and Virginia. A Northern analogue may be found in the provision of the Vermont Constitution of 1777, still in effect (chap. ii, § 21), referring to "quiet and peaceable behaviour." By Article VI, Sec. 2 of its constitution, good moral character is also required in Connecticut. Alabama required permanent employment for the greater part of the twelve months preceding, and authorized registers to ask applicants to state under oath the names of employers for the preceding five years, any willfully false answers to be regarded as perjury. Cf. J. L. W. Woodville, "Suffrage Limitations in Louisiana," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xxi, p. 177 (June, 1906).

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"Educa-  
tional"  
tests

whether even those negroes capable of qualifying under the first three requirements could qualify under the fourth. It is alleged that some Southern states having similar reading or intelligence tests deliberately included lengthy Latin quotations in their constitutions, the same being offered invariably for interpretation by negro applicants. White applicants, on the other hand, were given easy English passages to read, or if illiterate, to explain, any effort to do so being adjudged satisfactory by the white election officials. Also the latter might conveniently "forget" to require white applicants to produce tax receipts. Finally, the white officials might address a large number of detailed personal questions to the negro applicant, adjudging him guilty of perjury if he wandered in the slightest degree from the truth in reply and depriving him of the franchise on that ground.

"Grand-  
father  
clause"

In spite of their manifold suffrage requirements and the possibility of discriminatory administration, the laws of this character suffered from the defect that illiterate or propertyless whites were equally liable to be excluded under their terms, and might occasionally be excluded in fact. To meet this defect the famous "grandfather clause" was invented and applied at one time or another by four Southern states.<sup>1</sup> The essential thought behind this device was that while all existing suffrage restrictions such as were described above were to be maintained, they should be waived in the case of applicants who had voted or whose ancestors had voted prior to 1867. Of

<sup>1</sup> In South Carolina, constitution of 1895; Louisiana, constitution of 1898; and by constitutional amendments in North Carolina, 1907; and Oklahoma, 1910. Also in 1908, Maryland attempted to apply the grandfather clause to municipal elections in Annapolis, but this act was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States six years later. *Myers v. Anderson*, 238 U. S. 368. Closely similar to the grandfather clause was the "old soldier clause" adopted by Alabama in 1901; Virginia, 1902; and Georgia, 1908; which admitted nonproperty-owning soldiers and sailors who had fought on either side in the Civil War or in other wars prior to 1902, and also their descendants. The old-soldier clause admitted colored as well as white soldiers and their descendants, although, of course, there were very few of the former in proportion.

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course the negroes were not mentioned directly in any of the grandfather-clause enactments, but the great mass of them were effectually excluded by the various residence, tax-paying, literacy, or other tests, while white applicants were able to avoid all these simply because they could boast a voting ancestor at a date before negroes were permitted to vote.

How effective this form of discrimination was may be observed in figures relating to Lowndes County, a typical black-belt section of Alabama. According to the census of 1900, there were in this county 1,057 literate and 81 illiterate white males over twenty-one. Two years later there were 1,097 registered white voters. The male negroes over twenty-one numbered 6,455 in 1900, of whom 4,667 were illiterate. In 1902 there were only 39 registered colored voters.<sup>1</sup>

Effects

Oklahoma developed the grandfather-clause idea to the most extreme degree in a constitutional amendment, proposed by initiative and carried by popular vote, August 2, 1910.<sup>2</sup> Sec. 4a of the amendment is as follows:

Oklahoma  
grand-  
father  
clause

No person shall be registered as an elector of this State, or be allowed to vote in any election held herein, unless he be able to read and write any section of the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma; but no person who was, on January 1st, 1866, or at any time prior thereto, entitled to vote under any form of government, or who at the same time resided in some foreign nation, and no lineal descendant of such person, shall be denied the right to register and vote because of his inability to so read and write sections of such Constitution.

The Oklahoma clause, it will be noted, made a special exception in favor of persons of foreign extraction or descent as well as of illiterate natives. It differed from most of the other enactments of similar character also in that it imposed no time limit. In 1915 the Supreme Court

<sup>1</sup> W. E. B. Dubois, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Burns Annotated Supplement to the Revised Laws of Oklahoma, 1918, Sec. 3118.



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of the United States pronounced it in conflict with the Fifteenth Amendment and therefore unconstitutional.<sup>1</sup>

Expiry of  
grand-  
father  
clauses

Meanwhile the grandfather clauses had lapsed in the other states by self-limitation. It has been asserted that the period usually fixed for their operation, namely two or three years, was chosen partly because it was sufficient to serve the purpose of getting the poor whites on the voters' lists, and partly because it was not long enough to enable the Supreme Court to declare them unconstitutional before this had been done. As Professor Holcombe points out, the decisions of the Supreme Court adverse to grandfather clauses need not have the effect of extending the suffrage to any negroes now disfranchised, but may merely serve to exclude a number of poor and ignorant whites hitherto permitted to vote.<sup>2</sup>

Later an-  
tipathy to  
negro vot-  
ers

The net effect of the Fifteenth Amendment, therefore, has been to enfranchise negroes in the North and throughout the country generally, but not in the South, although it was the latter section which was aimed at particularly. Of recent years economic forces have led to a heavy colored emigration from the South to the North, as a result of which many of the men of this race have become actual voters for the first time in their lives. The political effects of this movement of the negro population have naturally been most marked in the border states. Even before it began there were evidences of a continuance in the North of the ante-bellum disinclination to admit negroes to the electorate. In 1912 the people of Ohio refused to ratify an amendment striking from the constitution of the state the word "white" relating to the suffrage. Of course this action had no practical effect since the limitation imposed by the word had ceased to operate with the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, but it was indicative of a persistent antipathy against colored voters.

According to the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, whenever the right to vote at any election . . . is denied to any of the male inhabi-

<sup>1</sup> *Guinn vs. U. S.*, 238 U. S. 347.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 148.

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tants of a state, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such state.<sup>1</sup> Here is a definite penalty that seems to fit exactly the case of grandfather clauses and other discriminations, avowed or concealed, against colored citizens in Southern states. Why has it not been enforced by appropriate legislation?<sup>2</sup>

Penalty  
threatened  
by Four-  
teenth  
Amend-  
ment

In the first place it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to determine exactly to what extent the suffrage has been abridged in Southern states by discriminatory as distinguished from other causes. The difficulties of registration and the indifference of voters, for example, keep many from the polls South as well as North. Assuming that this initial difficulty could be surmounted, it would be necessary to inquire to what extent adult male suffrage had been abridged by literacy, taxpaying and similar requirements other than "participation in rebellion or other crime," in Northern states and to penalize these states accordingly.<sup>3</sup> Reduction of the representation of Southern states would reduce their strength in the electoral college, but it would resolidify the solid South, and postpone indefinitely the cherished Republican dream of breaking it up, to say nothing of the loss of congressional and senatorial seats in certain border states which are now clearly debatable ground. Public opinion in the North has lost sympathy with the effort to enforce colored suffrage below Mason and Dixon's line. In this connection it is signifi-

Why not  
enforced?

<sup>1</sup> *Library of Congress List of Discussions on the XIVth and XVth Amendments, with special reference to Negro Suffrage*, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Knox, "Reduction of Representation in the South," *Outlook*, vol. lxxix, pp. 11, 169 (1905); E. O'Neal, "The Power of Congress to Reduce Representation," *North American Review*, vol. clxxxi, p. 530 (1905).

<sup>3</sup> Holcombe doubts, however, whether any Northern state would lose representation, except possibly Pennsylvania. *Op. cit.*, p. 149. But cf. also p. 145.

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cant that the fulminations against "criminal nullification of the Constitution," coupled with threats of penalties under the Fourteenth Amendment, which were common features of Republican national platforms from 1868 to 1908, have been succeeded by silence since the latter year. Resolutions to investigate suffrage conditions in the South with a view to the reduction of the representation of that section have been brought up in Congress repeatedly. They have produced the most splendid effects in verbal pyrotechnics, otherwise nothing. On May 18, 1921, a measure of this sort was defeated in Congress despite its overwhelming Republican majority, by a vote of 285 to 46. Moreover, the great mass of negroes in the South have accepted exclusion with apparent indifference. Finally, the real electoral contest in most Southern states takes place not in the elections, but in the primaries. By excluding the negro from participation in the primaries, as some Southern states have done, they have effectually excluded him from exercising any real political influence. Nor is any risk under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments incurred thereby, for the elections mentioned therein are not primary elections. The Fifteenth Amendment refers only to the right of citizens to vote. The Fourteenth Amendment mentions specifically elections for the choice of electors for President and Vice-President, representatives in Congress, executive and judicial officers of a state, or the members of the legislature thereof. The recent decision in the Newberry case seems to deny any congressional power whatever over primary elections. All things considered, therefore, it seems highly unlikely that any legal action will be undertaken against the Southern states because of their suffrage restrictions.

### SUFFRAGE FROM 1890 TO THE PRESENT TIME THE TRIUMPH OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE

In one only of the thirteen original states—New Jersey—could women claim the right to vote. By its constitu-

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tion of 1776 suffrage was conferred upon "all inhabitants of full age who are worth fifty pounds." Apparently few women availed themselves at first of the opportunity thus open to them. Later when a sufficient number took part in close elections to attract attention, the legislature excluded them (1807), by limiting the suffrage to "white male citizens."

Early  
woman  
suffrage in  
New Jersey

Agitation for woman suffrage attracted some attention and more ridicule during the 'thirties and 'forties of the last century. Organized work began in 1851. At first the movement was considerably involved with both temperance and anti-slavery agitations. The latter with its continuation after the Civil War in the struggle to enfranchise the negro undoubtedly tended to thrust to one side the claims of the women. On the other hand, the gift of suffrage to negro men, so far as it could be accomplished by the Fifteenth Amendment, made it more difficult to deny suffrage to women.

Beginnings  
of agitation  
for  
woman  
suffrage

In 1861, the first small success of the new movement was scored when Kansas came into the Union with a constitution conferring the franchise upon women in school affairs.<sup>1</sup> The argument that women have an especial interest in such matters made an excellent entering wedge, and before national suffrage was granted twenty-two states had followed the example of Kansas. It is significant that six of the twenty-three granted full suffrage to women before the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment. There were other scattered successes in the field of local suffrage such as conferring the right upon women to vote for library trustees; upon taxpaying women to vote on questions of taxation and bond issues; and, of more importance, the grant of full municipal suffrage, in which again Kansas was the leader in 1887.

Local suc-  
cesses

The admission of Wyoming in 1890 marks an epoch in suffrage history. For the first time women voters began

<sup>1</sup> Unless one counts the action of Kentucky which in 1838 permitted widows with children in the schools to vote in school elections. Holcombe, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

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Wyoming  
the first  
woman suf-  
frage state

to figure not only in local, but in state and national elections. As a matter of fact the women of Wyoming were enfranchised in 1869, by the first legislative council held in the territory after its organization. This action resulted originally from a bit of partisan byplay,<sup>1</sup> but the significant thing is that it gained general approval during the twenty-one years of territorial life, and in spite of a great deal of opposition and dismal prophecy, was insisted upon as an essential part of the first state constitution, when the question of statehood hung in the balance.

Other states  
adopt  
woman  
suffrage

Within six years after the admission of Wyoming, three other states conferred full suffrage upon women. Significantly enough, all three were immediate neighbors of the original suffrage state. Thereafter the movement hung fire so far as state-wide gains were concerned until 1910, when a succession of victories occurred, including the important states of California and New York.<sup>2</sup> The sacrifices made and services rendered by women during the World War unquestionably brought many converts to the cause.

National  
party planks  
on woman  
suffrage

In 1912, the Progressive national convention, in which women were largely represented, adopted a suffrage plank.<sup>3</sup> Prior to 1916, the platforms of the two major parties were silent on woman suffrage. In that year, with women already voting in eleven states, both parties expressed themselves somewhat cautiously as favoring its further exten-

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Shaw, *Story of a Pioneer*, p. 243. At the time this action was taken men outnumbered the women of the territory almost four to one. *Compendium IXth Census*, 1870, p. 546. However, in 1900 women made up 45 per cent of the population of the first four suffrage states admitted during the preceding decade. Abstract XIIth Census, 1900, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> The list is as follows: Wyoming, 1890; Colorado, 1893; Idaho and Utah, 1896; Washington, 1910; California, 1911; Arizona, Kansas and Oregon, 1912; Montana and Nevada, 1914; New York, 1917; Michigan, Oklahoma and South Dakota, 1918. In 1913, Illinois conferred statutory suffrage upon women covering all nonconstitutional state officers and presidential electors.

<sup>3</sup> As follows: "The Progressive Party believing that no people can justly claim to be a true democracy which denies political rights on account of sex, pledges itself to the task of securing equal suffrage to men and women alike." For the attitude of minority parties on suffrage, see chap. vii.



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sion by state action. Four years later, with women voting in sixteen states, including, so far as the Presidency was concerned, the highly important commonwealths of Illinois and New York, both parties warmly indorsed the pending national suffrage amendment.<sup>1</sup> In the midst of the national campaign it received the ratification of the legislatures of the necessary thirty-six states, and its adoption was proclaimed, August 26, 1920. The presidential election held less than ten weeks later thus became the first that witnessed the nation-wide participation of women voters.

During the struggle for the enfranchisement of women, anti-suffragists argued that woman's place was in the home; that she risked her highest prerogatives in that sphere by descending into the political arena; that most women were satisfactorily represented already through the votes of husbands, fathers, and brothers; that doubling the electorate would greatly increase the cost of campaigns and elections; that women would vote either exactly as their husbands did or on the basis of mere sentiment and emotion rather than of sober judgment and full information, or, finally, would lose interest and not go to the polls in numbers sufficient to affect the result.<sup>2</sup>

Anti-suffrage arguments

Advocates of suffrage made comparatively small use of the natural-rights argument, but pointed out that women were citizens, that the standards of education attained by the great mass of them were certainly not lower than those

Suffrage arguments

<sup>1</sup> The Nineteenth Amendment, also known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment in honor of the great leader of the suffrage movement, parallels the language of the Fifteenth Amendment, as follows: (1) "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. (2) Congress shall have power, by appropriate legislation, to enforce the provisions of this article." Passed by the House, May 21, 1919, by a vote of 302 to 89; the Senate, June 4, 1919, by a vote of 56 to 25. Supreme Court decisions, February 27, 1922, in *Fairchild vs. Hughes*, and *Leser vs. Garrett*, disposed of the last remaining technical legal objections to the Nineteenth Amendment.

<sup>2</sup> For a very ingenious attempt to unscramble the votes of men and women in the Portland, Oregon, election of 1914, using the statistical method known as partial correlation, see W. F. Ogburn and I. Goltra, "How Women Vote," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xxxiv, pp. 413-433 (Sept., 1919).

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obtaining among men, that many women owned property and paid taxes, and that ever-increasing numbers of them were finding industrial employment—all of these being conditions subjecting them to the control of government and all contributing to their fitness for the ballot. Owing to their special interest in such matters, the enfranchisement of women would react favorably upon the public schools, health, and morals, and would humanize working conditions, particularly in regard to the labor of women and children. Their votes would be thrown against the saloon, the brothel, the gambling den, and vicious social and political conditions generally. Finally it was urged that the exercise of suffrage would result not only in the betterment of government, but in the development of women themselves to a broader usefulness and a sense of their public responsibilities.

### Effects of woman suf- frage

At the present time, with woman suffrage established fully and irrevocably, public interest centers not in the more or less *a priori* arguments on the subject, but in the actual effects produced. These are extraordinarily difficult to disentangle, since the votes of women are cast and counted with no means to distinguish them from the votes of men. And, of course, it is much too early to expect definite results in the field of national politics. Certainly the prediction that women would not vote in considerable numbers has been falsified by the event.<sup>1</sup> Former anti-suffrage women go to the polls apparently to the same extent as their pro-suffrage sisters, and opposition to the Nineteenth Amendment is seldom heard of either among men or women. Women have begun to take an active part in the organization and work of political parties. The League of Women Voters, successor to the National American Woman Suffrage Association, has undertaken on a nation-wide scale a most intelligent program designed to educate women for the proper performance of their

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Holcombe, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-145, who estimates that in the older four suffrage states women voted apparently about five-sixths as generally as men.

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political duties. Women generally have not developed a mania for office seeking, nor leagued themselves against men on a basis of sex antagonism, nor employed their newly acquired political power to punish the former enemies of suffrage or to press for the ideals of extreme feminism.

The effect of woman suffrage upon the output of social legislation, particularly legislation in the interest of women and children, may be studied in those Western states where it has existed longest. With regard to its effects upon the character of women a careful observer writes: "It has enlarged their interests, quickened their civic consciousness, and developed in many cases ability of a high order which has been of service to the city, the county, and the state. . . . Equal suffrage is a step in the direction of a better citizenship, a more effective use of the ability of women as an integral part of the race, and a closer understanding between men and women."<sup>1</sup>

Suffrage  
and citizen-  
ship of  
women

A review of the three great suffrage periods in the history of the United States brings out certain decided similarities and contrasts. Between 1789 and 1860, white manhood suffrage was achieved largely as the result of the efforts of the disfranchised classes themselves, classes which were rising in the social scale, acquiring education and property at the same time that their political powers were increasing. This process was a gradual one, accomplished wholly by comparatively small changes made first in one state, then in another. Federal action was not involved in any way. In short it was an evolution, slow and sane, the results of which have justified themselves so thoroughly that it can be criticized only as to minor details.

Summary:  
white man-  
hood suf-  
frage

During the second period (1860-1890), the effort to enfranchise negroes was made with the federal government enacting the principal part. Post-war passions were prevalent to an extreme degree, and acceptance of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments was secured only

Negro suf-  
frage

<sup>1</sup> Helen L. Sumner, *Equal Suffrage, The Result of an Investigation in Colorado* (New York, 1909), pp. 258-260.

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by measures of duress so far as the Southern states were concerned. Recently freed from slavery, the colored race as a whole did not possess those qualities of cohesion and intelligence which alone would have enabled it to play an active part in the process. Indeed, the theory underlying the case was not that fitness justified the removal of suffrage disabilities by the Fifteenth Amendment, but that the removal of the disabilities would enable the colored race to develop fitness for the gift of suffrage. Against federal action the Southern states opposed every possible form of opposition, with the result that negro suffrage is almost wholly inoperative in that section.

Woman suf-  
frage

During the third period (1890-1920) woman suffrage won its way largely by the efforts of the women themselves, first in a series of impressive state victories, finally by the adoption of a national amendment which was secured wholly without the exercise of federal intimidation to secure ratification by the states. Earlier grants of suffrage were made for the benefit of members of a lower social class or race. Equal suffrage to women differs sharply from these earlier grants in that it extended suffrage not downward, but laterally. Under the prevailing views regarding the position of women in the United States it is safe to say that the standards of the women, socially and educationally, who received the grant of equal suffrage in 1920 or earlier, were certainly not inferior to those of the already enfranchised men of their own family and class. Finally the grant of suffrage to women accomplished during the period 1890-1920, seems to be accepted as unreservedly as the acquisition of white manhood suffrage during the period 1789-1860.

Existing  
qualifica-  
tions

A summary of existing qualifications for voting reveals a degree of liberality and, on the whole, of uniformity, both of which are in sharp contrast with the narrow restrictions in vogue at the beginning of our national life.<sup>1</sup> In all the states the old English rule fixing twenty-one

<sup>1</sup> K. H. Porter, "Suffrage Provisions in State Constitutions," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xiii, pp. 577-592 (Nov., 1919).

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years as the age of legal majority has been adopted as the voting age.<sup>1</sup> Citizenship is everywhere required except in the two states named above.<sup>2</sup> Besides felons, idiots, and the insane, persons are disqualified in nearly all states for various minor delinquencies, the most common being bribery and election offenses in twenty-one states, including betting on elections in three of them;<sup>3</sup> dueling in eleven states; malfeasance, desertion from military or naval service, and teaching polygamy. Paupers and vagrants are excluded in twelve states;<sup>4</sup> persons under guardianship by the same number; and soldiers and sailors by eight states.<sup>5</sup>

All states require a certain period of legal residence within the state, shorter periods being specified for residence in the county; city, or town; election district, precinct, or ward. State residence requirements range from three months to two years, the longer term being preferred, for reasons stated above, in the South. Thirty states require one year. In the county and town the term varies from ten days to one year; in the election district, ward, or precinct, from one day to one year. Legal residence, which is defined by the laws of the states, may or may not coincide with actual habitation. The individual's own intent established if need be by a sworn statement is usually accepted

Residence

<sup>1</sup> Registration and enrollment are usually permitted to persons whose twenty-first birthday falls between the date fixed for these requirements and election day. In Pennsylvania a minor becomes of age for voting purposes on the day preceding the twenty-first anniversary of his birth. Two states requiring payment of poll taxes, North Carolina and Pennsylvania, exempt persons just coming of age.

<sup>2</sup> In Massachusetts naturalized citizens must be United States residents for two years before voting. Chinese are excluded by California, Nevada, Oregon, and Idaho, and, of course, are more widely debarred because they are not eligible for naturalization. Indians not taxed are barred by ten states. Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin specifically include civilized Indians.

<sup>3</sup> Florida, New York, and Wisconsin. Betting on elections can, of course, be used as a concealed form of vote buying.

<sup>4</sup> Inmates of soldiers' and sailors' homes excepted by Louisiana and Oklahoma.

<sup>5</sup> Special arrangements were made to take the votes of soldiers and sailors in service during the Civil War and the World War.



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as conclusive, although the common practice of permitting a man's legal residence to determine where he shall be assessed for personal property, income, and poll taxes, complicates the situation.

Uniformity  
of national,  
state and  
local suf-  
frage

In this connection it is interesting to note that with the coming of woman suffrage the few differences that still existed in the United States between state suffrage and suffrage in cities and other local government units on the one hand, and between state and national suffrage on the other hand, have been reduced to a vanishing minimum.<sup>1</sup> The essential uniformity of our electorates in this respect is in sharp contrast with the differences still prevailing in England and certain European countries.<sup>2</sup>

Educational  
tests

Educational tests are imposed in sixteen states, eight of which are south of the Mason and Dixon line,<sup>3</sup> and four in New England.<sup>4</sup> Ability to read is all that is required by four states, the others usually requiring the applicant to read the Constitution and write his own name.<sup>5</sup> In Northern states which have educational qualifications the percentage debarred thereby is very low, Holcombe estimating it at only 4 per cent of the adult male citizens of Massachusetts in 1908.<sup>6</sup>

Tax-pay-  
ing qualifi-  
cations

Property qualifications have entirely disappeared with the exception of a single curious survival in Rhode Island permitting unregistered voting upon a shorter period of

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Munro, *Government of American Cities*, p. 106. In some states taxpayers only are allowed to vote on local expenditures or debt issues.

<sup>2</sup> C. F. G. Masterman, *How England is Governed*, chap. ii; Munro, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Alabama and Louisiana require ability to read and write or a property qualification; Mississippi, ability to read or explain the Constitution; Wyoming, ability to read the Constitution unless physically disabled.

<sup>4</sup> Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. By referendum New York has added to its other qualifications the ability to read and write English. Cf. V. J. West, "1921 Legislation respecting Elections," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xvi, pp. 460-465 (Aug., 1922).

<sup>5</sup> G. H. Haynes, "Educational Qualifications for the Suffrage in the United States," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xiii, p. 495 (1898); C. W. Dabney, "Illiteracy of Voting Population of the U. S.," in *Report U. S. Commissioner of Education*, 1902, p. 789; J. B. Phillips, "Educational Qualifications of Voters," *Univ. of Colorado Studies*, iii (1906).

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 149.

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residence to those "really and truly possessed" of local real estate worth \$134 or which shall rent for seven dollars a year.<sup>1</sup> However, fifteen states, eleven of which are Southern, require the payment of or assessment for state or poll taxes. Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania are the four Northern states which maintain such requirements. The manner in which they have operated in the South to exclude negroes has already been explained. In the few Northern states maintaining them they are of slight consequence. A distinction should be made between the Massachusetts law which simply requires assessment for poll taxes, and consequently excludes few, if any, and the Pennsylvania law which requires actual payment. The grave defect in connection with requirements of the Pennsylvania type is that, wherever political competition exists, party workers pay the poll taxes of delinquents, hand them the receipts, and usher them to the polls with the charitably pious and not often disappointed hope that they will vote "right" and "straight."

Some measure of the enormous sweep of suffrage movements during the whole period of our national life may be gained from the fact that whereas only 6 per cent of the total population possessed the right to vote during the revolutionary period, at present it is possessed by from 40 to 45 per cent.<sup>2</sup> No proposals are pending for any considerable additions to the electorate. This condition, it will be recalled, is unprecedented in our history, but could not well be otherwise, since with an adult citizenship basis

The present  
electorate

<sup>1</sup> R. I., chap. vi, Genl. Laws 1896. Voting after registration is open to male citizens twenty-one years of age, who have resided two years in the state and six months in the town or city, except that no person shall vote for city council or on proposals to levy a tax or to expend money unless he shall have paid a tax assessed upon his property therein valued at \$134 at least. Unregistered voting is permitted to males twenty-one years of age, possessing property to the amount stated above, upon residence of one year in the state, six months in the town or city. Property owned outside town or city, but inside the state, may also qualify for unregistered voting for general officers of the state and members of the General Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> J. Q. Dealey, *Growth of American State Constitutions*, p. 150.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

approximately attained no further extension is possible except by reduction of the age requirement.<sup>1</sup> In thoughtful circles the drift is clearly toward higher qualifications for the suffrage. It is, however, a far easier thing to extend than to curtail voting rights. A proposition of the latter character can easily be transformed into political capital to attract voters of the threatened class. Unless the latter are sadly deficient in number or influence, it is not likely that measures will be taken against them.

Possible future limitations

For the adoption of literacy tests by all states in the union a strong argument can be made in these days of universal education. Unless these requirements are made much higher than those already in force, however, they will reduce the electorates of Northern and Western states by very small percentages. Nevertheless, they may have a beneficial reaction upon the public schools. Further restriction of immigration would make the process of assimilation easier, but it is doubtful whether the process of naturalization should be made more difficult. Much may be said in favor of a uniform suffrage law for federal elections, but it would require an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which would be opposed strenuously by the Southern and border states.<sup>2</sup> Present taxpaying qualifications exclude but few in the Northern states, and, as we have seen, involve certain grave objections in practice. It is not desirable to raise them further, nor is there the slightest likelihood that they could be raised to a point excluding any considerable number of poorer citizens.

Improvement of the electorate

In short, the possibility of any material limitation of our present electorate is slight. European devices conferring plural votes or votes of greater value upon persons with large propertied interests or of high educational and social standing, have been constant causes of dissension, and are clearly outside the realm of the practical in Ameri-

<sup>1</sup> The constitution of the present German Commonwealth fixes twenty years as the voting age (chap. i, sec. ii, art. 22), although under the Empire the completed twenty-fifth year was required.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. W. Macdonald, *A New Constitution for a New America*, pp. 117-127.

## THE ELECTORATE

can politics.<sup>1</sup> To those who believe that our present electorate contains unsatisfactory elements, therefore, the most promising method of reform is to be found in the improvement of the electorate itself, by education, and by social legislation.

### BOOK NOTES

FOR a survey of voters and the voting process on the widest possible scale the reader may consult C. Seymour and D. P. Frary, *How the World Votes* (2 vols., 1918), Chs. IX to XIV of which are devoted to the United States.

\* K. H. Porter, *History of Suffrage in the United States* (University of Chicago Thesis, 1918), is the most comprehensive and useful monograph in this field. For a study of origins see C. F. Bishop, *History of Elections in the American Colonies* (Columbia University Studies, Vol. III No. 1, 1893), and A. E. McKinley, *Suffrage Franchise in the Thirteen English Colonies* (University of Pennsylvania, 1905).

In 1906 the Library of Congress issued a valuable *List of Discussions on the XIVth and XVth Amendments, with Special Reference to Negro Suffrage*.

The most monumental work on woman suffrage is the *History of Woman Suffrage* (4 vols., 1881-1902), edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and others. Helen Sumner, *Equal Suffrage: The Results of an Investigation in Colorado* (1909), deserves special mention as the most thorough and judicious discussion of the results in a single state prior to the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment. The *Woman Suffrage Handbook*, by Frances M. Bjorkman and Annie G. Porritt, published for the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1915, was widely used as a campaign manual.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. B. Munro, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-135, on the former Prussian three class system; Ogg and Beard, *National Governments and the World War*, pp. 426-430, on the plural voting scheme in Belgium, pp. 546-552 on class voting in Austria.

## CHAPTER XV

### ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

Early conduct of elections

SUFFRAGE laws, such as were discussed in the preceding chapter, merely state in general terms the qualifications and disqualifications of voters. The original practice in enforcing these laws was to allow applicants to present themselves at the polls and cast their ballots unless contested, in which case the matter was decided summarily by the election officials. In rural communities where every resident is well known this method worked satisfactorily, but in great cities it afforded no safeguard against illegal voting, which was made possible on a large scale by the presence of masses of casuals and foreigners.

Voters' lists

The first line of defense against this evil was the requirement, now made either by constitution or statute in all states, that lists of qualified voters be prepared in advance of election day. Under the older method of doing this the lists are made up by selectmen, poll-tax collectors, or some other body of local officers. This method had the advantage of allowing time for investigation, but in large cities it broke down hopelessly under the assaults of "colonists," "repeaters," and election criminals generally. It was notorious that in some wards the names of the dead were never removed from the lists and that "phantom voters" regularly appeared to cast their ballots. In the same way the names of electors who had changed their residence were regularly voted upon, and every other possible device was employed to pad the lists with the names of persons who were nonresidents or whose claims to the right of suffrage were of the most flimsy sort.



# ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

## PERSONAL REGISTRATION

Beginning in 1866, New York and California made a second and more thoroughgoing effort to meet this situation by the passage of personal-registration laws. The common feature of all such laws, which are now found on the statute books of more than forty states, is the requirement that the voter must appear personally in advance of the election before a board of registrars and produce satisfactory evidence that he possesses the legal qualifications for suffrage. In larger cities and in a few states this must be done every year or every two years, but with these exceptions it is sufficient to register upon coming of age or upon acquiring a new legal residence, the voter's name remaining on the lists thereafter until his death, removal, or disqualification.<sup>1</sup>

Personal  
registration  
laws

Three or four days are usually designated for the work of registration in our principal cities. As a rule the convenience of voters is consulted by designating different days of the week ten or more days apart. Thus in Pennsylvania cities of the first class the days chosen in even numbered years are the ninth Thursday, the seventh Tuesday, and the fifth Saturday preceding the general election. Some provision is usually made for the relief of those able to present satisfactory excuses for absence on these days. The work is performed by registrars at the regular polling places in each precinct. In all cases record is made of the voter's full name and residence, but in cities he must give under oath a mass of additional data such as his occupation; whether he is a householder, lodger, lessee, or owner, and if lodger or lessee of a portion only of a house the location or number of the room or floor he occupies; length of residence in the state and district; location from which he last registered with date; place of birth; whether being foreign born he produces his naturalization papers; payment of taxes, whether shown by

<sup>1</sup> In Pennsylvania, for example, the personal-registration law applies only to cities of the first, second, or third class.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

tax receipt or by making affidavit; his personal description, whether white or colored; his approximate age, height, and weight; and finally the voter's signature if able to write.<sup>1</sup> An interesting feature of the New York law, the purpose of which is obvious, is that whereby "a voter over thirty years of age may state such age as 'over thirty' and have it so entered on the register."<sup>2</sup>

### Check lists

All this information is tabulated alphabetically by the registrars for the use of poll clerks and judges on the ensuing primary or general election day as ballot check lists and voting check lists. It is a common practice to print and post in conspicuous places "street lists," showing by consecutive house numbers all voters registered from each house in each street of every precinct.<sup>3</sup> Substantial penalties involving fines and imprisonment are prescribed for violations of the law. In Pennsylvania false registration is punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000 or imprisonment not to exceed three years, or both; in New Jersey by similar penalties except that the term of imprisonment may be five years.

### Registration officials

As we have had occasion to notice already in connection with Southern suffrage laws, the effect of any system of registration depends largely upon the character of those who administer it. The common practice throughout the country is to appoint representatives of both the principal parties on boards of registration in the hope that mutual suspicion will prevent abuses by either. In Pennsylvania the governor appoints a central board of registration commissioners in each city of the first and second classes. The Philadelphia Board of Registration Commissioners is composed of five members, not more than three of whom

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Registration Act, First Class Cities, Pennsylvania* (Act 1919, sec. 13, P. L. 864). Those desiring to qualify for primary elections must also give the name of the party to which they belong.

<sup>2</sup> L. 1922, chap. 588, § 164.

<sup>3</sup> In New Jersey municipalities of over 15,000 inhabitants the chief of police makes an investigation of the registry lists to ascertain if the persons named therein are residents at the address given by them. *Election Law, Rev. 1920*, art. xi, sec. 120.

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

shall belong to the same political party. This board appoints, after examination, four registrars for each election district in the city, who "must be sober and judicious persons, of good moral character, able to read intelligently and to write legibly." Two of the four registrars must be members of the party polling the highest vote within the district at the last preceding November election, and one, at least, must be a member of the party polling the next highest vote. Nomination for appointment as registrar is made by petition signed by five or more qualified electors of the same party in the district. A New Jersey Law of 1911, repealed 1920, provided for nominations by party committees or by groups of citizens. These nominees were to be examined both as to character and fitness by the civil service commission, and from the list certified by the latter appointments were made by lot. Of course the success of this plan depended upon the nonpartisanship of the civil service commissioners. In addition to the estimable qualities noted above, it is desirable that registrars should be citizens of long residence, thoroughly familiar with the population of their districts. Experience is a great asset and every effort should be made to continue those who give good service for as long a period as possible.<sup>1</sup>

A stock argument against registration laws is that, no matter how searching and detailed they may be made, machine voters will never fail to get on the lists to 100 per cent of their strength, whereas many good citizens, immersed in their affairs, will not be able to find the time to appear annually or biennially before the registrars and consequently will be disfranchised, the net result being an increase of the strength of the machine. So far as machine voters possessing legal qualifications are concerned the argument is convincing. No doubt there are otherwise "good" citizens unwilling or unable to take the time to

Argument  
against reg-  
istration

<sup>1</sup> In Philadelphia 1,002 of the 3,333 district registrars in 1915 had served four years and more. *Tenth Annual Report, Board of Registration Commissioners*, p. 14.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

register, and still others who object to giving the detailed personal information required. It is impossible, however, to determine just how numerous these are as distinguished from the number of those, undoubtedly considerable, who would not take the trouble to vote even without the necessity of registering.<sup>1</sup>

Argument  
for registra-  
tion

If this were the end of the argument, decision would have to be given against personal registration. But it leaves altogether out of account the fact that, prior to the enactment of laws of this character, a substantial part of the machine strength, often a determining factor in close elections, was made up of fraudulent voters. Now fraudulent voting is made more difficult, costly and dangerous by personal registration. No doubt there are innumerable ways of beating the law, given the requisite agents and means.<sup>2</sup> And there have been deplorable scandals under carefully drawn registration statutes, notably the Terre Haute affair of 1914, when an orgy of fraud occurred involving the mayor and 115 other local politicians.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holcombe, *op. cit.*, p. 149, shows that of the total number of adult male citizens in Massachusetts less than 4 per cent were disfranchised by the literary qualification, whereas 13 per cent were disfranchised by failure to register. But even without the necessity of registration it cannot be maintained that the entire 13 per cent would have appeared at the polls.

<sup>2</sup> A very interesting account of the methods used in New York city in 1910 is given by E. R. Finch, "The Fight for a Clean Ballot," *Independent*, vol. lxiii, p. 1020 (May 12, 1910).

<sup>3</sup> Holcombe, *op. cit.*, p. 216. The Indiana registration law was only a year old at the time of the frauds of 1914. Those who committed them were commonly believed to have been guilty of similar practices with complete immunity for years previous. In this case they were convicted, although after a brief term in prison the verdicts were set aside by a decision of the United States Supreme Court. On the whole the incident does not reflect discredit on the registration law. It is the opinion of local observers as reported in a letter from Mr. Doyne Koonce, Aug. 6, 1922, that following the scandal of 1914, registration lists and elections in Terre Haute have become positively clean. Violence and fraud are no longer attempted. Party machinery, both Democratic and Republican, has passed into the hands of men and women keenly alive to the importance of securing the best possible election officials. Schoolhouses are utilized as polling places wherever possible and all polling places are in respectable neighborhoods, whereas formerly it was the practice to compel decent voters to cast their votes in the worst possible environment.

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

On the other hand, with proper administrators and with public opinion supporting personal registration laws, there is no doubt that voting lists may be made and kept reasonably clean. Offers by groups of responsible citizens of large rewards for evidence sufficient to convict violators of the law and a few stiff penalties thereunder have a very salutary effect. By such methods creditably clean elections have become the rule in Philadelphia, whereas less than thirty years ago it was commonly asserted and believed that there were fifty thousand fraudulent names on the rolls, and where, according to a current witticism, the signers of the Declaration of Independence were still voting regularly.<sup>1</sup> The wide extension of registration laws throughout the country is evidence that their utility is generally recognized.

Cleansing  
of voting  
lists

In the last analysis, therefore, it may be admitted that personal registration keeps from the polls a considerable but indefinite number of neglectful but otherwise, perhaps, desirable voters. Too much sympathy may easily be lavished upon citizens of this weak type. On the other hand, personal registration excludes a considerable but indefinite number of impersonators, repeaters, colonists, fraudulent voters, and election criminals generally. Even if the first of the above unknown quantities exceeds the second, there is a clear gain in the process. No democracy can afford to temporize with crimes against the ballot. Finally registration imposes no intolerable burden upon the citizen with a sense of public duty sufficient to induce him to make the personal effort necessary to keep elections honest. Some relief may be found in the permanent registration plans which require personal appearance only upon coming of age or change of residence, but it is evident that unless lists prepared in this manner are carefully supervised they may open the door to the return of the old evils.<sup>2</sup>

Conclusion

<sup>1</sup> For a very complete and vivid picture of conditions at this time see C. R. Woodruff, "Election Methods and Reforms in Philadelphia," *Annals American Academy*, vol. xvii, p. 181 (March, 1901).

<sup>2</sup> J. E. Orchard, "Omaha's Personal Registration Law," *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. v, p. 84 (Jan., 1916).



# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## ELECTION LAWS

### Earlier election laws

The earlier election laws of our commonwealths were comparatively brief and simple. They fixed the qualifications for suffrage, provided for the laying out of election districts and the choice of election officials, laid down a few rules for the conduct of elections, and defined various crimes such as bribery, fraudulent voting, intimidation, assault, ballot-box stuffing, defacing, alteration, or destroying election papers, and betting on elections. Later, with the rise of anti-liquor sentiment, laws were passed prohibiting the use of barrooms or rooms adjacent thereto as polling places and closing saloons or prohibiting the sale or furnishing of liquor on election day.

### Later election laws

During the last four decades not only have large additions been made to election laws of the above character, but wholly new fields of administration and regulation have been invaded. At the present time almost every detail of the election process is minutely prescribed by laws dealing with registration, with the printing and distribution of ballots, the furniture of polling places, the construction of voting booths and of ballot boxes, the presence of watchers and challengers, the forms used in counting, recording, and reporting the vote, the custody of ballot boxes, the final official count, and the conduct of contested election cases.

### Legal regulation and recognition of parties

It was characteristic of our earlier election laws that they did not attempt to deal with political parties as such; in fact, the existence of parties was ignored by the laws of this period. Beginning in 1888, however, with the adoption of the Australian ballot in its American form, this attitude of aloofness could no longer be maintained. And shortly thereafter, as we have already noted, primary election laws undertook to define parties and either to regulate or to administer for them the processes of nomination. At the same time Corrupt Practices Acts were passed regulating the financial methods of candidates and parties to a considerable degree. While, on the one hand,

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

laws of these newer types do limit certain partisan activities, on the other hand, they have given recognition to parties as such, thereby greatly enhancing the prestige of the latter.

As a result of these numerous additions the election laws of our states have grown to formidable proportions. In each of the more important commonwealths they make, published separately, a volume of three hundred pages or more. The text alone of the laws of New York runs to over 250,000 words; of Pennsylvania to 175,000; of New Jersey to 105,000; and of Wisconsin to 75,000. For the student of politics no manual is of greater practical importance than the election laws of his state. They may best be studied not simply as texts, but in connection with actual experience as registrars, poll clerks, watchers, or as ward or county committeemen. It is in the latter school that party workers have acquired most of their knowledge of the subject—a knowledge, by the way, which they are often able to use with telling effect against amateurs and reformers.

Size and  
importance  
of election  
laws

### BALLOTS

No part of our election procedure has been more profoundly transformed by law than that relating to ballots. Originally a number of the Colonies, following the old English tradition, conducted elections by the oral or *viva-voce* method. This method was defended as the only manly and open way of voting, and also on the ground that it enabled men of education and substance to voice their preferences publicly, thus taking the lead in influencing their humbler fellow citizens. On the other hand, the use of voting papers or ballots, which were introduced at an early date, was advocated as necessary to preserve the independence of poorer voters as against their influential neighbors. Further, the ballot system has the marked advantage that it affords a substantial record of the voters' choices in case of a dispute over the result of an election. The controversy thus raised between voting

Viva-voce  
voting vs.  
ballots

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

by ballot and voting orally lasted far into the nineteenth century, but ultimately the former method triumphed everywhere.<sup>1</sup>

Early forms  
of ballots:  
"scratch-  
ing"

Originally ballots were printed by candidates or party committees. They were distributed immediately outside the polling places by party workers and were marked and cast under conditions that made secrecy well-nigh impossible. These ballots were usually printed on long narrow sheets, and hence were known as "shoestring ballots." This form, which is in sharp contrast with the "blanket ballot" common to-day, still survives in Missouri and Mississippi. In the latter state the ballots used in 1920 were 42 by 3 inches. Shoestring ballots folded easily to vest-pocket size. By so folding them privately before going to the polls and by concealing them with the hand in depositing them in the ballot box a "vest-pocket voter" might possibly succeed in maintaining the secrecy of his ballot. Frequently they were printed on colored paper or on paper otherwise so marked that watchers could distinguish them from across the street. Fifteen states attempted to prevent this by passing laws requiring ballots to be printed on plain white paper, but by choosing white papers of different shade, texture, or finish the politicians could still tell which ticket a man voted. It is true that there was nothing to prevent persons who wished to vote independently from preparing written ballots of their own—nothing, that is, except the fact that their independence might become known to an unsympathetic community. Large numbers of "phony" ballots were circulated purporting to be the straight Republican or Democratic article, but in reality containing the names of one or more

<sup>1</sup> Virginia and Kentucky were the last to give up the *viva-voce* method. The former abandoned it during the Civil War. In the 1850 constitution of the latter the section on this subject read that: "in all elections the votes shall be personally and publicly given *viva voce*, provided that dumb persons entitled to suffrage may vote by ballot." This section was dropped in the revision of 1891. Cf. J. Schouler, "Evolution of the American Voter," *Am. Hist. Rev.*, vol. ii, pp. 665-674 (July, 1897); H. J. Ford, *Rise and Growth of American Politics*, p. 5.

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

candidates of the opposing party. A ballot of this sort might carry the name of the Republican party and its candidates for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency at the top with a full list of Democratic presidential electors immediately following. Persons who did not wish to vote straight merely "scratched" the names of the candidates they disliked, writing in others, hence the term still used in our politics although the practice itself has long since disappeared from all but half a dozen Southern states.<sup>1</sup>

There was no provision for secrecy in marking ballots at polling places. Since it was so easy to ascertain how a man voted, coercion and intimidation by employers and others could be practiced effectively. Also it was quite possible for a corruptionist who had bought a vote to place a ticket in the venal voter's hand and watch him until he deposited it in the ballot box. Thus "delivery of the goods" was insured, and one could pay over bribe money or use "soap"—as the slang of the day put it—with the certainty of having received a *quid pro quo*. Once in the ballot box, there was nothing to distinguish valid from invalid ballots. This made possible the use of "pudding" ballots, which were printed on thin paper so that two or more might be folded to look no larger than one when dropped in—possibly with the collusion of election officials. In general the existence of large blocks of ballots in the hands of irresponsible persons of all sorts made ballot-box stuffing easy.

Ballot  
frauds

Under such lax conditions and favored by the general absence of adequate registration, frauds were rampant, especially in cities, during the decades following the Civil War. Relief was sought by the introduction in a modified form of a ballot system originally used in Australia as early as 1856, and copied by England in 1872. The first trial of this system made in the United States was at a municipal election held in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1888. Thereafter the Australian ballot spread rapidly through-

Introduc-  
tion of the  
Australian  
ballot

<sup>1</sup> Scratching still prevails in Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

out the country until at present it exists in all the states, with the single exception of South Carolina. In that state the law simply requires that ballots for various offices be printed on white paper,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  by 8 inches, containing only names of offices and candidates. Two or three other Southern states have not adopted the Australian plan wholly, but they do apply the principle of a state guaranty of the genuineness of lists of candidates for state and national offices, which are certified by the secretary of state to county officials. The latter look after the printing and distribution of ballots.

Method of  
voting un-  
der Aus-  
tralian bal-  
lot system

Under the Australian system ballots are printed by state officials, their genuineness being attested usually by an indorsement on the reverse side, with the facsimiles of the signatures of the officials preparing them. They are distributed with extreme precaution to local officials immediately before the opening of the polls. Specimen or sample ballots are also prepared and distributed at polling places so that the voter may study them before calling for an official ballot. These specimen ballots do not bear the indorsement of the official ballot and to further distinguish them are usually printed on colored paper. After being checked up as to registration, the voter is handed an official ballot by the judge of elections. He must take it at once to a booth curtained from view, mark it, fold it so that the printed face of the ballot is concealed, and, emerging from the booth, deposit it in the ballot box leaving the polling place immediately. If the voter spoils a ballot he must return it to the election official, who cancels it and gives him another. In some states a third ballot may be obtained in the same way, but that is the limit for a single voter.

"Assist-  
ance" to  
voters

Australian ballot laws usually permit "assistance" to voters who plead inability to mark their ballots. In the case of a person pleading illiteracy or physical disability an oath is usually required to that effect, and a member of the election board, or two members of opposite political faiths, may be assigned to accompany him to the booth



## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

and mark the ballot in accordance with his instructions.<sup>1</sup> Neglect of these precautions, as in Pennsylvania general elections where the voter's word alone is sufficient and where he may choose "any qualified voter of the election district to aid him," obviously leaves the way wide open to defeat the purposes of the Australian ballot law.<sup>2</sup>

Another method employed to defeat the law is known as the "Tasmanian dodge," or "endless chain." By hook or by crook an official ballot is procured early on election day. One method of doing this is by collusion of election officials. Another is to send a dependable voter in at the opening of the polls with a piece of paper prepared to resemble a ballot. Securing an official ballot, he retires to the booth, pretending to mark it. Instead of depositing it in the ballot box, he deposits the worthless piece of paper brought with him, when the inspectors are not looking, carrying the unmarked official ballot to his confederate outside. The latter marks the ballot to suit himself, hands it to the next voter, who is instructed to deposit it and bring out another unmarked official ballot. By continuing this process throughout the day a corruptionist may assure himself that every one of his henchmen votes right. Thus he can pay for their services in the blissful assurance that the "goods" were "delivered."

"Endless  
chain"  
fraud

Of course every party to this procedure violates the law and lays himself open to more or less severe penalties in case of conviction. It may be prevented easily by employing the safeguard provided in New Jersey and a few other states. In these states every ballot has a numbered and detachable coupon at the top which the voter exhibits, after he has marked his ballot, to a member of

New Jersey  
coupon  
device

<sup>1</sup> *New Jersey Election Law, Revision 1920*, sec. 235. Assistance is now permitted in New Jersey to persons who cannot read English. Cf. V. J. West, "1921 Legislation Respecting Elections," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xvi, p. 460 (Aug., 1922).

<sup>2</sup> *Act 1903*, sec. 1, P.L. 213. By a later law, however (*Act 1913*, sec. 11, P.L. 732; sec. 23, P.L. 739), an affidavit is required for assistance in Pennsylvania primary elections. Philadelphia methods of using the assistance clause are described by C. R. Woodruff, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

the election board, without, however, displaying any part of the face of the ballot. Thereupon the member of the board removes the numbered coupon from the ballot and himself, in full view of the voter and other officials, deposits it.<sup>1</sup> By this procedure the secrecy of the ballot is preserved and the removal of any official ballot from the polling place is effectually prevented.

### Marking ballots

Australian ballot laws usually require voters to mark their ballots only with a penciled cross mark in the squares to the right or left of candidates' names. In some states they may be marked only with a circular stamp the use of which excludes the possibility of making crosses in such a way that they might be identified. Many ballots are invalidated in whole or in part because of neglect to follow the rules prescribing the way in which they shall be marked. In New York City alone there were in the election of 1914 blank, void, and defective ballots as follows: for governor, 23,831; for lieutenant-governor, 56,163; for secretary of state, 57,275; and so on down the ticket, making an average of over fifty thousand votes lost on the ticket as a whole. Controversies over valid and invalid markings on ballots are sometimes carried to the courts. Although it is somewhat difficult for the lay mind to fathom the grounds for the decision, the Court of Appeals of New York<sup>2</sup> held the following alleged cross marks to be valid:



and the following to be void:



<sup>1</sup> *New Jersey Election Law, rev. 1920*, secs. 171, 225, 232. Stubs of a similar character are used in California, Colorado, Maryland, Montana, Ohio, and Oregon.

<sup>2</sup> Fallon, app., 197 N. Y. 336 (Jan. 25, 1910).

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

All the foregoing legal subtleties are designed to protect the secrecy of the ballot. Yet apparently without exception the Australian ballot laws of our states permit a voter to write in the names of candidates when he is dissatisfied with the printed list. Thus by simply writing in for some minor office a name agreed upon—fictitious or otherwise—any voter may betray the identity of his ballot. With the aid of a confederate among the election officers a corruptionist on the outside may assure himself that purchased votes were cast as he wished.

Writing in  
names of  
candidates

The laws of the various states prescribe every detail of form and arrangement to be followed in printing official ballots. A study of the ballots used in the presidential election of 1920 shows that two main types prevailed throughout the country—the party-column type, and the Massachusetts, or office block, type. Besides these two principal forms there were numerous variations of detail, all of which may be classified according to the relative difficulty of voting a straight or a split ticket.<sup>1</sup>

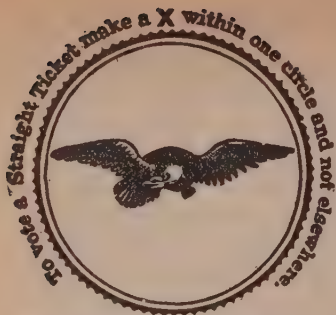
Types of  
ballots

In party-column ballots the offices to be voted for are arranged in the order of their rank—national offices first, state and local following—each party being given a separate column with its name prominently displayed at the top. Besides the name, fourteen states print party emblems at the top of the column—*e.g.*, for the Democrats a rooster or a star; for the Republicans an eagle or an elephant; for the Prohibitionists a fountain.<sup>2</sup> A single cross

Party col-  
umn ballots:  
party em-  
blems

<sup>1</sup> For a thorough discussion of the relative difficulty of voting various types of ballots see, P. L. Allen, "Ballot Laws and Their Workings," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xxi, pp. 38-58 (March, 1916).

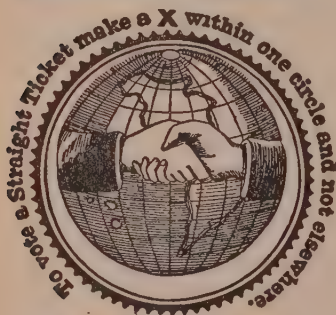
<sup>2</sup> In the election of 1920, party-column ballots with emblems and circles for straight voting were used in Alabama, Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York (presidential-election ballot), Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah, and West Virginia; without emblems but with circles for straight voting in Arizona, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. Texas should be added to the latter group inasmuch as a voter in that state may vote straight simply by drawing a line through the columns of the parties other than the one he favors. Also Missouri and North Carolina properly belong in this group, for their ballots are not of the familiar blanket type, but consist



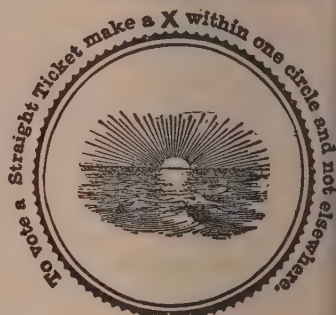
**Republican Ticket**



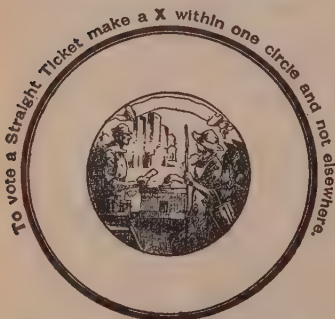
**Democratic Ticket**



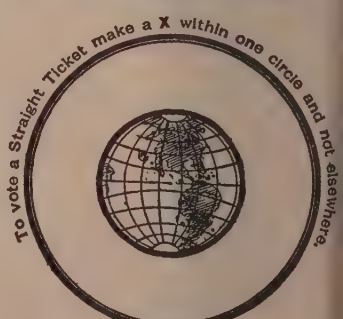
**Socialist Ticket**



**Prohibition Ticket**



**Farmer-Labor Ticket**



**Single Tax Ticket**

PARTY EMBLEMS

OFFICIAL STATE BALLOT OF INDIANA, ELECTION OF 1920

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

mark in a circle surrounding or under the name of the party or emblem votes for every candidate of that party. A voter desiring to split his ticket must make a cross mark for each office to be filled, picking his way horizontally across the ballot and taking care not to put down more than one cross mark for each office.<sup>1</sup> Manifestly the difficulty involved in voting a party-column ballot is at a maximum for the elector who wishes to split his ticket and at a minimum for the elector who wishes to vote a straight ticket. And the use of party emblems enables the illiterate citizen to vote straight with the greatest ease. He does not have to know enough to read the words "Republican" or "Democratic" at the top of the columns; all he has to know is the difference between an eagle and a rooster.

In the pages immediately following are presented portions of the ballots (1) of Massachusetts, illustrating the office-block type; (2) of Pennsylvania, which is a hybrid between the office-block and party-column type, so arranged, however, as to favor straight ticket voting; and (3) of New York (state and local elections), which adds to the office-block type miniature party emblems for the guidance of voters.

of long slips for each party. These are voted straight simply by depositing them, and cut by scratching and writing in.

<sup>1</sup> In some states, as at present in Pennsylvania, after marking a cross to indicate a straight ticket otherwise, the voter may split his ticket for any particular office by placing a cross mark opposite the name of a candidate of another party for that office.



# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

To vote for a Person, mark a Cross X in the Square at the right of the Party Name, or Political Designation. **X**

CONGRESSMAN — Twelfth District ..... Vote for ONE

HARRISON H. ATWOOD — of BOSTON ..... Republican

JAMES A. GALLIVAN — of BOSTON ..... Democratic

WILLIAM H. O'BRIEN — of BOSTON ..... "The People's Candidate"

COUNCILLOR — Second District ..... Vote for ONE

HORACE A. CARTER — of NEEDHAM ..... Republican

AUGUSTUS W. PERRY — of BOSTON ..... Democratic

SENATOR — Ninth Suffolk District ..... Vote for ONE

HENRY S. CLARK — of BOSTON ..... Republican

DAVID W. MURRAY — of BOSTON ..... Democratic

To vote for a Person, mark a Cross X in the Square at the right of the Party Name, or Political Designation. **X**

GOVERNOR ..... Vote for ONE

CHANNING H. COX — of BOSTON ..... Republican

WALTER S. HUTCHINS — of CHENFIELD ..... Socialist

PATRICK MULLIGAN — of BOSTON ..... Socialist Labor

JOHN J. WALSH — of BOSTON ..... Democratic

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ..... Vote for ONE

MARCUS A. COOLIDGE — of FITCHBURG ..... Democratic

DAVID CRAIG — of MILFORD ..... Socialist Labor

ALVAN T. FULLER — of MALDEN ..... Republican

THOMAS NICHOLSON — of METHUEN ..... Socialist

ROBERT M. WASHBURN — of BOSTON ..... Independent

SECRETARY ..... Vote for ONE

FREDERIC W. COOK — of SOMERVILLE ..... Republican

EDWARD E. GINSBURG — of BROOKLINE ..... Democratic

ANTHONY HOUTENBRINK — of BOSTON ..... Socialist Labor

EDITH M. WILLIAMS — of BROOKLINE ..... Socialist

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

**FIRST COLUMN**

To vote a straight party ticket mark a cross (X) in this column.

REPUBLICAN

DEMOCRATIC

**SOCIALIST**

PROHIBITION	
-------------	--

JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT (Vote for One)	William I. Schaffer, Republican	Eugene C. Bonnell, Democratic	Alfred B. Lewis, Socialist	Charles Palmer, Prohibition
--	---------------------------------	-------------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

JUDGE OF THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS (Vote for One)	Isaac Johnson, Republican	
Alexander B. Geary, Democratic	Luther Kaufman, Socialist	
Albert Dutton MacDade, Prohibition		

JUDGE OF THE ORPHANS' COURT	
(Vote for One)	
John B. Hannum,	Republican Socialist
Matthew Randall,	Democratic Prohibition

[illegible]

COUNTY CONTROLLER	
(Vote for One)	
George T. Wadas, Republican	
Elizabeth H. Brooks, Democrat	
Joseph Smith, Socialist	Prohibition

DIRECTOR OF THE POOR  
(Vote for One)

Elizabeth Baker Cheaney, Republican	Elizabeth N. Calvert, Democrat
Walzer M. Lodge, Socialist	Marguerite Dickson Werner, Single Tax

PORTION OF PENNSYLVANIA BALLOT, ELECTION OF 1921

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Office-  
block, or  
Massachu-  
setts ballot

The office-block type of ballot, first used in Massachusetts and since copied by several states, groups the candidates for each office in a block, the name of each candidate being followed by the name of his party.<sup>1</sup> To vote this ticket fully a cross mark must be placed opposite the name of a candidate for each office to be filled.<sup>2</sup> Therefore it requires just as many cross marks and just as much discrimination in placing them to vote this form of ticket straight as to split it.

Intermedi-  
ate forms

Some forms intermediate to the two principal types may be mentioned. Montana, New Jersey, and Wyoming arrange candidates' names in party columns, but as no provision is made for voting straight by a single cross mark these ballots approximate the Massachusetts type in effect. Exactly the opposite is true of the ballots of Nebraska and Pennsylvania, which arrange the offices in blocks and then provide circles or squares at the side for voting a straight ticket by a single cross mark. But the most curious combination of all is found in the New York ballot for state and local offices which uses the Massachusetts or office-block form, adding to the name and party of each candidate the symbol in miniature of each party he represents.

The directions for voting the New York ballot are as follows:

1. To vote for a candidate on this ballot make a single

<sup>1</sup> Besides Massachusetts, the following states used this type of ballot in 1920—Arkansas, California, Colorado, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, Oregon, and Tennessee.

<sup>2</sup> In the Massachusetts ballot the names of the candidates of each party for presidential electors are grouped together, only one voting square being provided for each party, and the printed instruction reads "vote once." This prevents the absurdity of splitting the ticket on presidential electors and must greatly facilitate the count. Five other states using either the party column or office-block form of ballots, followed this practice regarding presidential electors in the election of 1920—viz., California, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Dakota, and Rhode Island. Nebraska omitted the names of presidential electors and provided one circle opposite the names of Harding and Coolidge, Cox and Roosevelt, etc.

Vote for one!		GOVERNOR	1
		ALFRED E. SMITH.....	Democratic
		NATHAN I. MILLER.....	Republican
		JOSEPH D. CANNON.....	Socialist
		GEORGE F. THOMPSON.....	Prohibition
		JOHN P. QUINN.....	Social Labor
		DUDLEY FIELD MALONE.....	Farmer-Labor

Vote for one!		ATTORNEY-GENERAL	6
		FRANK H. MOTT.....	Democratic
		CHARLES D. NEWTON.....	Republican
		DARWIN J. MESEROLE.....	Socialist
		WILLIAM H. BURR.....	Prohibition
		JOHN DONOHUE.....	Social Labor
		F. R. SERBI.....	Farmer-Labor

Vote for one!		LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR	2
		GEORGE R. FITTS.....	Democratic
		JEREMIAH WOOD.....	Republican
		JESSIE W. HUGHAN.....	Socialist
		EDWARD G. DETMERS.....	Prohibition
		JEREMIAH D. O'GOWLEY.....	Social Labor
		ROBERT E. HATFEY.....	Farmer-Labor

Vote for one!		STATE ENGINEER AND SURVEYOR	7
		PAUL McLOUD.....	Democratic
		FRANK M. WILLIAMS.....	Republican
		VLADIMIR KARAPETOFF.....	Socialist
		ARTHUR S. LIGHT.....	Prohibition
		CHAS. C. CRAWFORD.....	Social Labor

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

cross X mark in one of the squares to the right of an emblem opposite his name.

2. To vote for a candidate NOT on this ballot write his name on a blank line under the candidates for that office.
3. Mark only with a pencil having black lead.
4. Any other mark or erasure on this ballot is unlawful.
5. If you tear, or deface, or wrongly mark this ballot, return it and obtain another.

### Nonpartisan ballots

Florida alone has the distinction of using in general elections an absolutely nonpartisan ballot—that is, a ballot that designates neither by printed word nor by symbol the party affiliation of any candidate or group of candidates.<sup>1</sup> While ballots of this type are the exception in general and state elections, they are widely used throughout the country to fill offices in which partisanship is generally recognized to be undesirable, as, *e.g.*, judicial, school, and other local offices.<sup>2</sup> A nonpartisan ballot makes the heaviest demand upon the voter's intelligence. If it is of any considerable length he can vote it straight only by taking with him to the polls a list of his party's candidates. In this connection it is worth noticing that the Australian ballot as it is used in that country and in England is a nonpartisan ballot, simple and short. The circles, squares, and columns, the blanket size, and other devices which make independent voting difficult in so many of our states are purely American excrescences upon the original system.

Because they make straight voting easy, party-column ballots are naturally favored by organization politicians. The voting of a ballot of the Massachusetts type amounts

<sup>1</sup> The Florida ballot uses the Massachusetts or office-block form. Mississippi and Virginia also use ballots free of party symbols and designations. However, candidates for presidential electors are grouped according to party on their ballots.

<sup>2</sup> The nonpartisan ballot used in Nebraska, 1920, was larger than the partisan ballot. In the election of the same year various state officers were also voted for on nonpartisan ballots in California, Minnesota, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wyoming.



## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

to an educational test in itself, and the same is true to an even greater extent of a nonpartisan ballot. In elections where both party-column and nonpartisan ballots are used a considerable number of the more ignorant voters do not even attempt to mark ballots of the latter type. Organization workers sometimes hold schools of instruction to teach illiterates how to vote the more difficult forms of ballots, but the success attending such educational efforts is only moderate. Nor have the happiest results followed from attempts to devise a voting pattern. This consists of a sheet of paper of exactly the same size as the official ballot, perforated at the right places for making the desired cross marks. A voter so stupid as to need help of this sort is likely to get the pattern out of adjustment or upside down.

Party-column ballots favored by organization politicians

Naturally, also, independents and reformers prefer ballots of the Massachusetts and nonpartisan types. Those who believe that the suffrage is too widely extended look with favor on forms of ballots which allow illiterate and ignorant voters to go through all the motions of voting without getting anywhere. On the other hand, it is no doubt true, as Holcombe points out, that most voters know comparatively little about the merits of individual candidates.<sup>1</sup> What they really want to do with their votes is to express their general approval of one or another party by voting its ticket straight. Since voters of this type predominate as compared with discriminating voters, motives of convenience urge that they be allowed to do so by marking a single cross in the party square.

Massachusetts and nonpartisan ballots favored by independents

More important, however, than any consideration of expediency is the fact that the Massachusetts and nonpartisan ballots place a premium on independent voting. As late as the 'eighties of the last century this was regarded as a form of party treason, but the habit has been growing rapidly. The percentages of voters making opposite decisions on national and state candidates—*i.e.*, preferring a President nominated by one party and a governor by

Growth of independent voting

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 210.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

another—were as follows: in 1896, .38 per cent; 1900, 1.22 per cent; and in 1904, 7.57 per cent. In the latter year ten states showed discrimination on this basis in excess of 10 per cent.<sup>1</sup> Now the results of independent voting are so beneficial not only upon parties, but upon the conduct of public affairs generally, that those forms of the ballot which encourage it have a strong argument in their favor.

“Blanket”  
and sepa-  
rate ballots

It is the general practice, as shown by a study of the ballots used in 1920, to print the names of all offices and candidates, together with initiated and referred measures, on a single large sheet, hence the familiar “blanket” ballot. However, several states use two or more sheets, one for national, the other for state and local offices; or one for partisan, the other for nonpartisan candidates.<sup>2</sup> Ten states print constitutional amendments and other initiated and referred measures on a separate sheet. Separate ballots make the practice of straight voting slightly more difficult, and, in the case of initiated and referred measures, have the further advantage of calling the voter’s attention to the existence of such measures.

Position on  
the ballot

It is a curious fact that a certain small percentage of voters will mark the first column of a ballot or the first name in a list of candidates, regardless of any other consideration.<sup>3</sup> Under the party-column ballot plan advantage of position from left to right is usually assigned to the parties in the order of the vote cast by each at the preceding state election. Under the office-block plan names of candidates may be placed according to the strength of parties nominating them, or in alphabetical order, or as determined by the drawing of lots. An ingenious device for equalizing advantage of position among

<sup>1</sup> P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics*, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> New York has separate ballots for presidential electors, and for state and local offices; North Carolina and Vermont for national, state, and congressional candidates; Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming for partisan and nonpartisan offices.

<sup>3</sup> For a quantitative study of the strength of this factor see the author’s “Voters’ Vagaries,” *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. x, pp. 161-165 (March, 1921).

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

candidates is known as the rotating ballot. Under this plan candidates' names are arranged alphabetically, but ballots are so printed and bound that each candidate heads the list in the ballots as they are given out the same number of times as any of his competitors.<sup>1</sup> While simple enough for ballots involving one or a few offices only, this device could be applied only with great difficulty to large ballots used in general elections.

At times the suggestion is made that more intelligent voting might result from the use of a "who's who" ballot giving, in addition to the candidate's name, party, and office sought, as is customary at present, such further personal information as, for example, his residence, age, occupation, education (common school, high school, college, or university), and public offices previously held.<sup>2</sup> Of course this information and more is given in occasional pamphlets prepared by good-government leagues, and, in one or two states, by publicity pamphlets, but these are issued some time before elections. Such information as may be placed on a ballot reaches every voter who cares to read it at the moment of voting. With the long ballots in use, however, few would take the trouble to do so in all probability. If they did, longer voting hours and more polling places would be necessary. Candidates would probably object to the printing of certain facts about themselves. Thus the somewhat indefinite distinction implied by the label "college graduate" would do more harm than good in many precincts. Age might be misstated in the case of those too youthful or too advanced in years. On the other hand it is worth noting that even such extremely short ballots as are used in English elections state the addresses, occupations, civil and military offices held, and public distinctions conferred upon candidates. In the

"Who's  
who" bal-  
lot

<sup>1</sup> Thus if Andrews, Johnson, Smith and Williams are candidates, the first ballot to be detached may present their names in that order; the second will then read, Johnson, Smith, Williams, and Andrews; and so on. For a legal formulation of this plan see Minnesota, L. 1915, chap. 67, secs. 334, 342; Wisconsin, L. 1917, chap. 466.

<sup>2</sup> P. O. Ray, *op. cit.*, p. 346, gives a draft form of a "who's who" ballot.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

United States ballots used for the November, 1920, election in nine states gave the town or city address of candidates.<sup>1</sup>

Planks  
printed on  
ballots

In a few Northwestern states candidates are permitted or compelled to state within brief limits the principal planks or issues on which they stand.<sup>2</sup> Some idea of the way in which this privilege is used may be gained from the following statements taken from the ballot of Portland, Oregon, November 2, 1920, the first four being the statements of candidates for mayor, the second four, of candidates for city commissioner:

"Will continue to meet all issues fearlessly and impartially for Portland's progress."

"A business man for Mayor."

"Immediate reduction car fares, electric light and telephone rates. Municipal ownership."

"Will serve the people, not the interests."

---

"For re-election. More industries—more payrolls—a common sense, business administration."

"Greater Portland; greater industries; lower prices for street and sewer improvements."

"A clean government and a greater Portland."

"Progressive development for public benefit. Resist bonds, taxes for wasteful profiteering oligarchs."

Voting  
machines

The use of voting machines in elections has been authorized by law in fourteen states and also by Act of the 55th Congress.<sup>3</sup> In Indiana more than one third of the vote

<sup>1</sup> Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia. Of these the Rhode Island ballot gives the street address also. Primary ballots used in Pennsylvania, September, 1921, gave town and street addresses of candidates for all but borough offices.

<sup>2</sup> In Montana this practice prevails in primary elections. See also S. Dakota L. 1917, chap. 234.

<sup>3</sup> As follows: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, Utah, and Wisconsin. However, California, Colorado, and Rhode Island repealed their laws on the subject in 1921. Cf. V. J. West, *op. cit.* In the same year New York passed an Act which makes the use of voting machines compulsory in cities of the first class.

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

and in Connecticut and New York state outside New York city, more than one half of the vote is now cast and counted by machine. The face of the machines used for this purpose reproduces the ordinary printed ballot, but instead of making cross marks the voter pulls down pointers over the names of the tickets, candidates, or measures that he favors. While doing this he is screened from view by a curtain. Before he swings it back to release himself the pointers spring into place again, thus preserving the secrecy of his vote. As the vote is cast it is automatically recorded on counters at the rear of the machine, and the result may be ascertained instantly at the close of the day's polling by unlocking the counter compartment.

Voting machines offer many advantages, chief among which are the speed and accuracy with which votes may be taken and counted. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the refusal to employ them in some cities is due to the rooted objection therein prevailing to quick and honest returns. Besides their major advantages the machines have other points in their favor. They offer a degree of secrecy that paper ballots, no matter how safeguarded, can never give. By ingenious interlocking devices it is made impossible for a voter to cast a defective ballot. On the other hand, the objection is made to certain types of voting machines that they "provide a party column, and this fact, plus the timidity of many voters when faced with a piece of machinery with which they are not familiar, will encourage 'straight-ticket voting.'"<sup>1</sup> However, this may easily be remedied by adopting the Massachusetts form both for ballots and for machines. Of course the initial expense of voting machines is considerable, but they permit economies in several directions. Fewer election districts are needed and fewer election officers in each district. Voting booths, ballot boxes, and other paraphernalia are unnecessary, and the cost of printing and dis-

Advantages  
of voting  
machines

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Boots, "A Model Election System," *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. x, p. 605 (Dec., 1921).



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

tributing large masses of ballots is saved. One of the strongest points in their favor is that they put an end to expensive and harassing recounts and contests.

### PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

Population  
and number  
possessing  
voting qual-  
ifications

Having completed the discussion of suffrage qualifications, one is faced by the question, to what extent do qualified voters actually go to the polls? In 1920, the total population of the United States was 105,710,620. Of these, 44,824,100 were minors, leaving 60,886,520 of voting age. Of the latter, however, 6,464,688 were not citizens. The total number possessing both age and citizenship qualifications is, therefore, 54,421,832, divided by sex and nativity as follows:

ADULT CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES IN 1920  
BY SEX AND NATIVITY

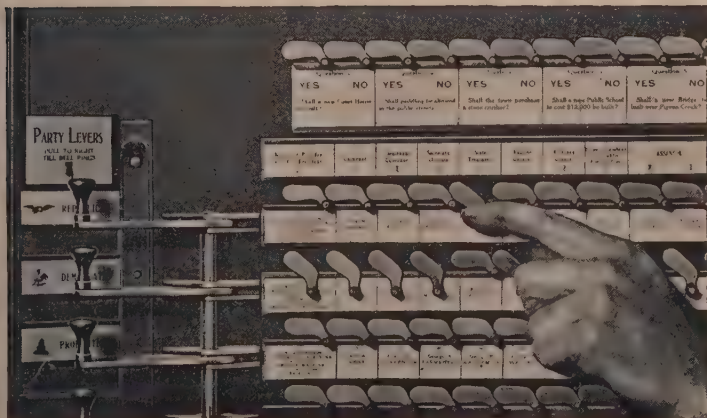
	Native Born	Foreign Born (naturalized)	Total
Male .....	24,339,776	3,322,104	27,661,880
Female .....	23,860,351	2,899,601	26,759,952
Totals ....	48,200,127	6,221,705	54,421,832

Of the total number of adult citizens as shown by the above table for 1920, 11.4 per cent were naturalized. The proportion of men to women was 508 to 492.

Various de-  
ductions

How many of these fifty-four million adult citizens belong to the electorate it is impossible to say.<sup>1</sup> Accepting current estimates, 3,850,000 negroes are disfranchised by the suffrage requirements of the Southern states. Assuming that the educational requirements of eight Northern states exclude as large a proportion as the Massachusetts requirement, an additional deduction of 250,000 must be

<sup>1</sup> In the two states Arizona and Missouri, where foreigners who have taken out first papers are still permitted to vote, the total number of such persons over twenty-one in 1920 was only 16,638.



VOTING STRAIGHT TICKET (ABOVE)

SPLIT TICKET (BELOW) ON A VOTING MACHINE

(COURTESY OF THE AUTOMATIC REGISTERING MACHINE COMPANY, INC.,  
JAMESTOWN, N. Y.)



## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

made on this account. In the absence of definite figures, Professor Hart's estimate of a loss of 1 per cent because of residence requirements does not seem excessive with a population so mobile as that of the United States.<sup>1</sup> This would have accounted in round numbers for 500,000 votes in 1920. Poll-tax requirements in Northern states may account for an additional 200,000. The prison population of voting age was approximately 150,000. From twenty-five to thirty thousand persons throughout the country may have lost the right to vote because of conviction for crime, but as there is no systematic supervision in this field, it is probable that many such persons vote with impunity. Insane and feeble-minded adults in hospitals numbered perhaps 200,000. There were 85,000 paupers in almshouses, but in many states they are permitted to vote. The number temporarily disqualified through failure to register is probably much larger than any one of these items, but will not be taken into account here because in large part it represents personal negligence. Allowing for these various deductions, it seems probable that the number capable of qualifying for suffrage in 1920 was close to 49,000,000.<sup>2</sup>

In the presidential election of that year, 26,786,758 votes were cast. Apparently, therefore, twenty-two million persons who might have voted did not do so. This situation is not so black, however, as some moralists would have it appear. It must be remembered that women were enfranchised throughout by far the greater part of the country less than ten weeks before election day in 1920. While everything possible was done in most cases to facilitate their registration, it was out of the question to expect anything like a full vote from them. In two states, Georgia and Mississippi, which require registration six and four months prior to election, respectively, women were barred from voting in 1920. Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt

Smaller  
relative par-  
ticipation in  
1920

<sup>1</sup> "The Exercise of the Suffrage," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. vii, pp. 307-329 (June, 1892).

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Hart, *op. cit.*, estimated that in 1880 under manhood suffrage there were 11,000,000 qualified voters in a total population of 50,153,738.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

estimated that in the country as a whole three women voted to every five men. In Illinois, where the votes of men and women were kept separate, the number of women voting for the presidential candidates was 61.1 per cent that of the men.<sup>1</sup> According to the best possible estimates, over six million possible women's votes were lost in 1920. This factor alone accounts in large part for the smaller relative participation of 1920 as compared with earlier presidential years.

Earlier  
percentages  
of participa-  
tion

By making due allowance for those incapacitated by old age, illness, and accidents, and for those unavoidably absent from home, Professor Hart managed to figure out a participation of nearly 84 per cent of those qualified in 1880. According to this estimate only one voter in six could be accused of failing to vote because of unforeseen circumstances, intimidation, or sheer neglect. For the North Atlantic and North Central states another authority reaches a normal average of participation amounting to 84.5 per cent from 1868 to 1904.<sup>2</sup> While these estimates may be somewhat exaggerated, it is nevertheless true that the proportion of those who vote to the number qualified is much higher in American elections generally than in those European countries which have a democratic suffrage.<sup>3</sup>

Nonvoters  
in 1920

Applying Professor Hart's methods to the conditions of 1920, we find that there were about 2,200,000 qualified voters in that year who were over seventy years of age. To many of these a trip to the polls, especially when the weather is inclement, is out of the question. Sick-benefit societies expect their members to lose one week a year. One may be too ill to work and yet be able to vote, so that a deduction of 1 per cent of those between twenty-one and seventy on this score, making 450,000, is perhaps

<sup>1</sup> *World Almanac*, 1922, pp. 460, 691.

<sup>2</sup> H. S. Lyon, "What Proportion of Voters Go to the Polls," *Yale Review*, vol. xvii, pp. 85-92 (May, 1908).

<sup>3</sup> E. M. Halstead, city statistician of Boston, made some very interesting studies of participation in that city. Cf. *Municipal Register*, *City of Boston*, 1920, pp. 253-297; also *Boston City Record*, *passim*.



## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

allowable. Absence from home was estimated by Professor Hart at 2 per cent, but with the new laws on that subject, half that proportion, representing another 450,000 voters, may be allowed.<sup>1</sup> Adding to the figures stated in this paragraph the lost votes of newly enfranchised women in 1920, we reach a total of 9,000,000. However, this still leaves 13,000,000 nonvoters, or 26.6 per cent out of a total of 49,000,000 qualified in that year, who may be accounted for partly by intimidation and unforeseen circumstances and to a much greater degree by neglect and indifference.

Owing to the fact that the basic figure—*i.e.*, the size of the electorate itself—must be estimated roughly, such percentages as the foregoing are likely to prove misleading. The percentages of the vote cast to the total population, however, is beyond question, since both these factors are definitely ascertainable. The percentage of vote to population for the United States, exclusive of territories in the last five census years during which presidential elections occurred, was as follows: 1840, 16.9 per cent; 1860, 17 per cent; 1880, 18.6 per cent; 1900, 18.7 per cent; and 1920, 25.3 per cent. In the following table figures are shown for the presidential election of 1920, and the census of that year is drawn upon for the figures showing population.

Percentage  
of vote to  
population

The results shown by the table below mirror not only all the suffrage limitations discussed in the preceding chapter, but also another powerful factor hitherto unmentioned. Throughout large sections of the country the overwhelming predominance of one party or the other is clearly established. In these sections such political contests as occur are fought out in the primaries. Since almost without exception the election does nothing more than to reaffirm the result of the primary contest in the dominant

Effects of  
predomi-  
nance of  
one party

<sup>1</sup> L. B. Evans, *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xv, p. 217 (1921) estimates that 2 per cent of the voters of Massachusetts lose their votes through absence, but the percentage is probably smaller in large states with a predominantly rural population.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

PERCENTAGE OF VOTE TO POPULATION  
IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1920, BY STATES<sup>1</sup>

Rank	State	Population	Number votes cast, 1920	Percentage of votes to population
1	Indiana .....	2,930,390	1,262,398	43.0
2	Delaware .....	223,003	94,756	42.4
3	Missouri .....	3,404,055	1,330,636	39.1
4	Kentucky .....	2,416,630	918,711	38.0
5	Iowa .....	2,404,021	894,094	37.1
6	New Hampshire ...	443,083	158,744	35.8
7	Nevada .....	77,407	27,194	35.1
8	Ohio .....	5,759,394	2,019,480	35.0
9	West Virginia .....	1,463,701	509,942	34.8
10	Montana .....	548,889	179,004	32.6
11	Utah .....	449,396	145,828	32.4
12	Illinois .....	6,485,280	2,090,468	32.2
13	Kansas .....	1,769,257	570,220	32.2
14	North Dakota .....	646,872	205,777	31.8
15	Idaho .....	431,866	134,941	31.2
16	Colorado .....	939,629	292,053	31.0
17	Minnesota .....	2,387,125	735,838	30.8
18	Oregon .....	783,389	238,522	30.4
19	Nebraska .....	1,296,372	382,653	29.5
20	Maryland .....	1,449,661	427,264	29.4
21	New Mexico .....	360,350	105,131	29.1
22	Washington .....	1,356,621	393,594	29.0
23	Wyoming .....	194,402	56,199	28.9
24	New Jersey .....	3,155,900	904,060	28.6
25	Michigan .....	3,668,412	1,045,280	28.4
26	South Dakota .....	636,547	181,118	28.4
27	New York .....	10,385,227	2,891,784	27.8
28	Rhode Island .....	604,397	167,386	27.6
29	California .....	3,426,861	943,344	27.5
30	Wisconsin .....	2,632,067	701,280	26.6
31	Connecticut .....	1,380,631	364,012	26.3
32	Maine .....	768,014	197,530	25.7
33	Massachusetts .....	3,852,356	990,109	25.7
34	Vermont .....	352,428	89,930	25.5
35	Oklahoma .....	2,028,283	484,574	23.8
36	Pennsylvania .....	8,720,017	1,849,692	21.2
37	North Carolina ....	2,559,123	538,740	21.0
38	Arizona .....	334,162	66,687	19.9
39	Tennessee .....	2,337,885	428,626	18.3
40	Florida .....	968,470	146,823	15.1
41	Arkansas .....	1,752,204	180,603	10.3
42	Alabama .....	2,348,174	241,070	10.2
43	Virginia .....	2,309,187	231,001	10.0
44	Texas .....	4,663,228	413,522	8.8
45	Louisiana .....	1,798,509	125,892	6.9
46	Georgia .....	2,895,832	148,724	5.1
47	Mississippi .....	1,790,618	82,492	4.6
48	South Carolina ....	1,683,724	66,150	3.9
	United States .....	105,273,049	26,653,976	25.3

<sup>1</sup> Table from Swarthmore College thesis, 1922, by H. L. Hutchinson.

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

party, a great many voters do not trouble to go to the polls. Hence the very low percentages recorded by the states of the solid South in the above table. There are no unusual suffrage restrictions in Pennsylvania, but the Republican party is practically certain to win every state-wide contest in that commonwealth. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the percentage of the vote to population in that state is the lowest shown by any state north of Mason and Dixon's line. Indiana has a broad suffrage, comparatively few foreigners, and is a recognized battleground of the two parties. In the presidential election of 1920 forty-three out of every one hundred of its population actually presented themselves at the polls and voted.

### ABSENT-VOTING LAWS

Of recent years an energetic effort has been made throughout the greater part of the country to provide voting facilities for one considerable category of electors hitherto unable to participate because of unavoidable absence from home on election day. The first absent-voting law was passed by Vermont in 1896, Kansas following in 1901.<sup>1</sup> In 1913, however, the movement began to sweep the country, acquiring additional momentum after our entrance into the war, when it was made use of by many states to enfranchise their citizens absent on military or naval service.<sup>2</sup> At the present time thirty-nine states have absent-voting laws applying to civilians. Of the remaining nine states, all but two—Georgia and Florida—have either military absent-voting laws or constitutional amendments, passed or pending, providing for military or civilian absent voters' laws.<sup>3</sup>

Extent of  
absent-vot-  
ing legisla-  
tion

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Pennsylvania L. 1869*, chap. 55, sec. 19, for a very limited form of absent voting established in 1869.

<sup>2</sup> P. O. Ray, "Military Absent-Voting Laws," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xii, pp. 461-469 (Aug., 1918).

<sup>3</sup> States having civilian absent-voting laws, with date of enactment, those of the North Dakota type italicized, as follows: Vermont, 1896; Kansas, 1901; *Minnesota*, Missouri, Nebraska, *North Dakota*, *South Dakota*, 1913;

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

### Types of absent-vot- ing laws

Absent-voting laws are of two main kinds—the Kansas type which enables the absent voter to secure a ballot on election day only, from election officials of the place wherein he finds himself; and the North Dakota type, which permits him to secure a ballot from his local officials prior to election day. Recently the drift of legislation has been strongly toward the North Dakota type.

### Kansas plan

The Kansas method avoids the not inconsiderable danger due to the issue of official ballots prior to election day. On the other hand, it suffers from the defect that most of the ballots sent in by mail, except from places only a short distance away, arrive too late for anything but the official count.

### North Da- kota plan

By issuing ballots prior to election day the North Dakota plan incurs the danger noted above, but gains the advantage due to the arrival of the absent voters' ballots in time to be counted with the other ballots. Technically the greatest difficulty of the North Dakota plan is due to the necessity, constitutionally prescribed in some states, of preserving the secrecy of the absent voter's ballot. If nothing is done to distinguish such ballots from ordinary ballots the secrecy of the absent voter's ballot is secured, but, on the other hand, his ballot, transferred to a corruptionist prior to the opening of the polls, may be used to commit the "endless chain" fraud. If the absent voter's ballot is clearly marked as such it cannot be used for fraudulent purposes. But since it may happen that only one ballot of this kind is cast in a polling place, election officers knowing who is absent will, of course, know how this absent person marked his ballot. Of the two dangers, the former is clearly the greater. Accordingly, most of the more recent laws provide that absent voters' ballots must either be printed on colored paper or must bear the in-

Colorado, Iowa, Michigan, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, 1915; Oklahoma, Virginia, 1916; Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, 1917; Kentucky, Tennessee, 1918; Alabama, Massachusetts, Utah, 1919; Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, 1920; Arizona, Louisiana, Maine, Nevada, West Virginia, 1921.

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

scription conspicuously printed on the back, "Official Absent Voting Ballot."<sup>1</sup>

Rather elaborate rules are laid down, especially under the North Dakota plan, not only to preserve the secrecy of absent voting, but also to guard against abuse of this privilege. The following details, taken from the New York law of 1920, may serve to illustrate the general practice in this field. A qualified voter expecting to be unavoidably absent on election day must make application to the board of elections of the city or county in which he resides not less than seventeen days prior to the date of the election. The application must be accompanied by an affidavit giving various items of personal information, including a statement of the causes of the anticipated absence. If the board of elections finds that all requirements of registration, residence, and so on have been duly complied with, it delivers an absentee ballot or set of ballots with an official envelope to the applicant in person, or, if he shall have so requested, to a member of his family, or they may be mailed to him at any address in the United States.

New York  
law of 1920

The official envelope which must be used in returning the ballot carries on one side the superscription "Official Ballot, Absentee Voter for General Election," with spaces for date, signature, residence, and election district of voter. On the other side is a printed form of oath to be made by the absent voter, containing among other matters a statement to the effect that, "I will be unavoidably absent from the state or county of my residence because of duties, occupation or business . . . on the day of election; (and) that I have not qualified nor do I intend to vote elsewhere than as set forth on the reverse side of this envelope." Opposite the oath instructions are printed as to the duties of the voter after marking the ballot, and as to the time

Official  
absentee bal-  
lot

<sup>1</sup> North Dakota, 1913, was the first state to require absent voters' ballots to be printed on colored paper, but more recently Massachusetts and Utah, 1919; Mississippi, 1920, and Arizona, 1921, have followed her example. Also New York, 1920, and Maine, 1921, provide for conspicuous printed inscriptions on the back of absent voters' ballots.



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the envelope must reach the office of the board of elections in order that the vote may be canvassed. The absent voter must mark his ballot in the accustomed manner, fold and inclose it in the envelope, and seal it. He must then take and subscribe to the oath on the envelope, filling in blank spaces as required and mail it to the board of elections from which he received it. In most absent-voting laws the voter is required to mark his ballot in the presence of the notary public or other official who is to take his oath, in such a manner, however, that the latter may not know how it is marked.

Reception  
and count

Envelopes received by the board of elections not later than noon of the Friday before election are delivered unopened to the boards of inspectors of the proper election districts. Immediately after the closing of the polls the envelopes are canvassed by the inspectors, the absentee voter's signature is compared with his signature at the time of registration, the check list is looked over to see that no one has voted in person under his name, and if all is found in due order and no challenge is made the envelope is opened and, without being unfolded, the inclosed ballot is deposited in the box to be counted in the same manner as the others.

Absent vot-  
ing in pri-  
maries:  
other de-  
tails

In some states absent voting is permitted in general elections only, in others—and this is becoming the more common practice—it is permitted in both primaries and elections.<sup>1</sup> A few laws also permit registration *in absentia*. Most of the laws require that a voter must anticipate absence at least from the county to qualify for the receipt of an absent voters' ballot, the Massachusetts equivalent for this proposition being "in a municipality which

<sup>1</sup> Of the states recently enacting absent-voting laws the following extend the practice to both primaries and elections: Arkansas, Idaho, 1917; Alabama, 1919; Mississippi, 1920; Louisiana, West Virginia, 1921. The Massachusetts law, 1919, refers to the annual state election; the New Jersey and New York laws, 1920, to the general election only. For the provisions of earlier laws on this point, see P. O. Ray, "Absent-Voting Laws, 1917," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xii, p. 252 (May, 1918).

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

is separated by at least two municipalities from the city or town where the voter is registered."

Under the Kansas plan absent voting was possible only from places within the state, and the same limitation was imposed in some laws of the North Dakota type. Of course the military absent-voting laws had to disregard this limitation, and the tendency of the civilian laws of later date is to permit voting "within or without the state, but within the United States," as the New York law puts it.<sup>1</sup> Only Tennessee and Virginia authorize absent voting in practically any part of the world.

Distance

Absent-voting laws were intended originally for the benefit of persons unavoidably compelled to be away from home on election day, as *e.g.*, commercial travelers, transportation employees, engineers, contractors and business men engaged on work at a distance from their election districts, state and federal officials whose duties send them far afield, and finally college and university students.<sup>2</sup> However, more recent enactments are extending the privilege to persons remaining at home but unable to come to the polls because of illness or physical disability. In such cases a physician's certificate must accompany the voter's application and affidavit. Wisconsin in 1916 and Indiana in 1917 were the first states to do this. Their example was followed by New Jersey in 1920. Indiana also permits persons under quarantine to vote *in absentia*. A North Dakota law even extends the privilege to "any woman who resides one-half mile or more from the polling place of her voting precinct."<sup>3</sup>

Illness,  
physical  
disability

<sup>1</sup> Besides New York the following apparently permit voting from outside the state but within the United States: Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, and South Dakota.

<sup>2</sup> Attempts by students to register and vote in their college or university town have usually been met by judicial denials of legal residence therein. This has been held to be the case even when the students concerned were earning their own living in the college town. For a much-quoted decision on this subject see *Fry's App.*, 71 Pennsylvania, 302, March 19, 1872. In some states legislative enactments expressly forbid the acquisition of legal residence by students in college or university towns.

<sup>3</sup> L. 1919, chap. 32.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

### Extent of voting in absence

In practice absent-voting laws do not seem to be availed of to any great extent. The percentage of voters taking advantage of them varies considerably from state to state. In Albany County, New York, only 226 votes were cast *in absentia* out of a total of 80,990 in the presidential and state election of 1920. At the local election a year later there were only 109 absent votes out of a total of 82,182.<sup>1</sup> In Douglas County, Nebraska, there were only 161 absent voters out of a total of 28,293 votes cast at the primary election of 1922.<sup>2</sup> However, as the laws on this subject come to be more widely known there may be some increase in the number of absent voters. It is evident that the numerous formalities required to qualify for absent voting deter many who are compelled to be away from home on election day. In the administration of the laws frequent frauds are reported by some states, but in others crookedness is unknown in connection with absent voting.<sup>3</sup>

### COMPULSORY VOTING

### Is it worth while?

Upon consideration of all the facts regarding failure of voters to participate in elections, one finds the situation to be less discouraging than alarmist writers are accustomed to represent it.<sup>4</sup> Occasionally, however, denunciations of the "apathy of voters" and lamentations over "the waning interest in elections" are joined with proposals to make voting compulsory.<sup>5</sup> Assuming the largest pos-

<sup>1</sup> Figures supplied by H. C. Gibb of the Board of Elections of Albany County.

<sup>2</sup> Figures supplied by W. D. McHugh, Election Commissioner, Douglas County.

<sup>3</sup> R. S. Boots, "A Model Election System," *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. x, p. 604 (Dec., 1921).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. T. Williams, "High Cost of Elections," *Century*, vol. cii, p. 409 (July, 1921).

<sup>5</sup> On compulsory voting in Belgium see Ogg and Beard, *National Governments and the World War*, p. 430. The office of the Porto Rican Commissioner in Washington writes that Sec. 16 of the Porto Rican Registration and Election Act of June 25, 1919, makes voting obligatory under penalty of imprisonment for not more than one year and loss of suffrage rights in the two succeeding elections.

## ELECTIONS AND BALLOTS

sible measure of success in such an undertaking, nothing more could be accomplished than the securing of the physical presence at the polls of persons without sufficient patriotic spirit or interest in the election to present themselves voluntarily. Is such a result worth the very considerable effort it would cost? Indeed, one may well question whether it would be desirable even if it could be obtained without effort.

It must be remembered, moreover, that, owing to the secrecy of the ballot, voters whose attendance was compelled could make a joke of the law by depositing unmarked or spoiled ballots. Also among those who now vote willingly enough there are doubtless many who would absent themselves out of sheer perversity if compulsion were attempted. It is certain that communities which now tolerate absenteeism would wink at the violation of compulsory voting laws.

Possibility  
of evasion

Of course the effectiveness of such laws would depend largely upon the penalties employed. Imprisonment is manifestly out of the question. To put absentees on jury lists, as proposed by certain reformers, would reduce the quality of juries—certainly none too high at present—much more than it would improve the electorate. To impose difficulties upon absentees when they present themselves for registration is futile, and would make for chronic instead of occasional neglect of suffrage duties. Fines could be imposed, but not in large amounts. And small fines would bring to the polls only those poorer voters to whom they represented a substantial penalty.

Penalties

The doubtful value of compulsory voting, thus apparent upon analysis, has been confirmed by such experience as we possess. Our Colonial statute books were full of quaint laws on the subject, long since dead, buried, and forgotten.<sup>1</sup> In 1918, however, Massachusetts adopted, by a close vote of 134,138 to 128,403, a constitutional amendment author-

Colonial  
precedents;  
recent en-  
actments

<sup>1</sup> For some interesting quotations from these legal curiosities see A. B. Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

izing the legislature to provide for compulsory voting.<sup>1</sup> So far, however, the legislature has not availed itself of this authority. The only other recent enactment in this field was the Oregon law of 1915, providing that one who fails to vote at least once in two years cannot vote again without going to the trouble of re-registration or of "swearing in" his vote at the election. In 1920, however, when the legislature submitted a constitutional amendment to provide for both compulsory registration and compulsory voting, presumably under penalty of fines or temporary disfranchisement, it was rejected by popular vote of 131,603 to 61,258.<sup>2</sup>

The ideal  
goal

If the ideal of democratic suffrage is the nearest possible approach to a 100-per-cent participation in elections, it is evident that compulsory voting laws will not attain it. Nor is any other short cut to this goal likely to be discovered. Here, as in other problems of suffrage, the most hopeful solution is to be found in those slow processes of education and social reform which increase the number of alert and intelligent citizens.

### BOOK NOTES

If practical political effectiveness is aimed at the study of election laws generally must be supplemented by intensive study of the election laws of one's own state. Usually compilations of these laws may be obtained without cost upon application to the secretary of state, and students should be urged to supply themselves with copies. Also election laws are frequently reprinted in full in the manuals prepared for the use of members of the state legislature. Finally they may be consulted in the codifications or revisions of state laws published from time to time, but care should be taken to see that these are of

<sup>1</sup> *Constitutional Amendment LXI, Acts and Resolves*, 1919, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> J. D. Barnett, "Compulsory Voting in Oregon," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.* vol. xv, p. 265 (May, 1921).



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late date. Subsequent enactments may be traced in the annual volumes of statutes.

\* E. C. Evans, *History of the Australian Ballot System* (University of Chicago Thesis, 1917), is the most valuable monograph in this field. K. H. Porter, *History of Suffrage*, cited under the preceding chapter, may also be consulted to advantage.

M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, Vol. II; pp. 209-304 (1902), gives a brief historical sketch of registration in the United States. P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics*, Ch. XIII (1917), presents a number of illustrations showing the various types of ballots. From the point of view of the state the subject is well treated by A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States*, Ch. VIII (1916); and from the municipal viewpoint by W. B. Munro, *The Government of American Cities* (3d ed., 1921).



*PART IV*

PROBLEMS OF PARTY REFORM IN THE  
UNITED STATES



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE SHORT BALLOT; PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

AT the beginning of our national history the ballots used in elections were short and easy to vote. In a few of the smaller agricultural states they have remained so, comparatively at least. Thus the ballot used in New Hampshire in the 1920 election, although including national, state, and local offices, was only 14 by 11 inches. The Minnesota ballot for national and state offices, 20 by 5 inches, with constitutional amendments on a separate sheet 6 by 5 inches, was also comparatively short and simple. In all the great urban and industrial commonwealths, however, ballots had become so large and complicated before the end of the nineteenth century that to vote them intelligently was a matter of the utmost difficulty. By uniting all the old-style "shoestring" tickets on a single official sheet the Australian ballot law revealed the true magnitude of the voter's problem.

American  
ballots orig-  
inally short

### THE SHORT BALLOT

For a number of years the conviction gained ground among statesmen and students of political science that the conditions thus revealed were responsible for many serious political evils. In 1911 a movement to combat these evils took definite form with the establishment of the National Short Ballot Organization. The platform of the Progressive party in 1912 contained a plank "urging on the states the policy of the short ballot, with responsibility to the people secured by the initiative, referendum, and recall."

National  
Short Ballot  
Organiza-  
tion



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

This is the only instance in which the issue has been mentioned in a national platform. It is not too much to say, however, that all the more thoughtful leaders of both parties have enrolled themselves as believers in the short ballot.

Causes making American ballots long

Before examining the proposals of the Short Ballot Organization it may be well to review the causes that have made American ballots so prodigiously long and complicated. With the growth of population, of course, the number of public offices, among them elective offices, increased. In fact, offices increased more rapidly in proportion because of the nineteenth-century tendency to extend the powers of the state into new fields of administration and regulation.<sup>1</sup> Of course, these factors were at work also in the democratic countries of western Europe, where, nevertheless, the short ballot remained in use. In the United States, however, certain additional factors were developed either exclusively or to a degree unknown across the Atlantic.

Separation of powers; Jacksonian influence

Among these was the theory of the separation of powers which was first introduced, with due sense of proportion, however, in the federal government. Later it was carried to an extreme degree by states and cities, with a consequent absurd multiplication of authorities and office holders checking and balancing each other. Next Jacksonian democracy, rejecting the caution of the fathers of the Constitution with regard to popular elections, proclaimed the doctrine that the most certain means to secure the rule of the people were, (1) to make the largest possible number of public offices elective, and (2) to shorten the terms of office holders so that they should be forced to submit their conduct frequently to the approval or disapproval of the people. Little or no distinction was made by the advocates of this doctrine between policy-expressing and policy-executing offices, with the result that large numbers of administrative and judicial offices were made

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States*, pp. 289-315; J. M. Mathews, *American State Administration*, part iii.

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elective, a condition well-nigh unknown in European countries.

Our ballots were further burdened because of the federal nature of our government and because of the enormous development within our states of administrative districts and local government units, each with many officials to elect. Until a comparatively recent date when municipal elections were transferred to another season of the year, it was the general custom to hold elections for national, state, county, and city offices all on one day, which naturally resulted in making the joint ballot used for the occasion a huge affair. More recently still the extension of the initiative and referendum has added considerably to the ballot's burden, particularly in our Western states.

As the combined result of the above factors some of the ballots used in American states have reached phenomenal proportions. Thus in the Wisconsin election of 1904, the ballot measured 35 by 24 inches. The Illinois ballot of 1920 was slightly smaller, being 33 by 25 inches. The New Jersey and Pennsylvania ballots of 1920 were 25 by 21 inches. The New York ballot for presidential electors was 19 by 19; for state officers, 17 by 18; and for amendments 8 by 7 inches. But the difficulty of voting a ballot is determined not by the number of square feet it covers, but by the number of questions it places before the voter for decision. In the latter respect the ballot used November 2, 1920, in Portland, Oregon, probably represents a world's record. It was 40 inches long by 14 inches wide. A little over a third of this space was occupied by eleven state and seven municipal initiative and referendum issues. Printed in small type, these ran to about two thousand words. The remainder of the ticket contained the names of 91 candidates running for 52 offices—national, state, county, and municipal. The chief difficulty in voting the Portland ticket of 1920 lay in deciding the questions submitted to popular vote. They were of such a character that to answer them would have required weeks of study by persons already fairly versed in political science, economics,

Federal  
nature of  
our govern-  
ment

Actual size  
of ballots

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

and local business conditions. So far as candidates were concerned, the Oregon ballot was of average difficulty only. On this score it cannot rival the Chicago ballot cited by Professor Kales, which contained 267 names of men running for 53 offices, exclusive of presidential electors. "In New York city the number of elective offices in state, city, and county to be filled by popular vote in a cycle of four years is nearly five hundred. In Chicago there have been six thousand nominees in a single primary election. Philadelphia, although smaller than these cities, elects more officials than either."<sup>1</sup>

"Elections"  
not  
"election"

In this connection a leader of the short-ballot movement writes: "The habit of saying 'election day,' and 'election' instead of 'elections,' has caused more trouble than any other idiom of the language. When we fill ten offices by popular vote in a single day, we call it 'an election,' but it is really ten elections."<sup>2</sup>

Blind voting

Confronted by ballots of such size and difficulty, the average citizen, nay the exceptional citizen, must confess that he votes blindly so far as perhaps nine tenths of the candidates and offices are concerned. Former President Eliot of Harvard, the "ideal citizen," once admitted in a public address that this was true in his case.<sup>3</sup> In 1915 it was written of his successor that:

The president of Harvard University, for example, is one of 1,708 voters in his ward who elect two members of the city council each year. He is one of the 10,666 voters of his school district, nearly a third of whom are women, who elect a member of the school committee each year. He is one of 8,254 voters in his state representative district who elect three members of the legislature each year. He is one of 15,309 voters in his senatorial district who elect one state senator each year. He is one of 22,013 voters in his city who elect a mayor, thirteen aldermen, and a variety of other city officials each year. He is one of 50,966 voters in his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Short Ballot* published by the National Short Ballot Organization, New York, 1919. This pamphlet will be referred to hereafter simply by title.

<sup>2</sup> R. S. Childs, *Short Ballot Principles*, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *The Short Ballot*, p. 7.

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

congressional district who elect a member of Congress each second year. He is one of 84,933 voters in his councilor district who elect a member of the state executive council each year. He is one of 136,500 voters in his county who elect each year a varying number of county officers, whose terms run for three or five years as the case may be. He is one of 674,174 voters in the state who elect six state officers each year, eighteen presidential electors every fourth year, and two United States Senators in the course of each six years.<sup>1</sup>

Of course every one of the statements in the foregoing paragraph holds with equal truth for each voter who happened to reside in the same ward as the president of Harvard. And statements of the same general tenor might be made regarding the complicated series of electoral duties devolving upon every voter in the United States. As a matter of fact they would be even more formidable in states where judges are elected directly by the people.

In addition to more or less blind voting on the part of the best intentioned citizens, the cumbersome ballots of the day are responsible for much of the apathy which prevails with regard to politics. The average man necessarily finds most of his energies absorbed by the process of earning a living; the average woman is largely engrossed in household cares. They desire to perform their civic duties properly but cannot give unlimited time to this task. With personal registration every year, and with one or two primaries or elections each year, both of the latter involving long and difficult ballots, many turn aside from politics, except perhaps when an occasional thrilling contest takes place. Under these circumstances denunciations of "civic slackers" and oratorical appeals for a "100-per-cent turnout" at the polls accomplish little or nothing. The real and only solution, according to short-ballot advocates, is to reduce the number of elections and to simplify the ballot—in other words, to adjust the fran-

**Apathy**

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Holcombe, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

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chise burden to the abilities and available energies of those who have to carry it.

Long ballot  
a politician's  
ballot

Worse than blind voting and civic apathy, however, is the fact that our blanket ballots give every advantage to the organization and to the practical politician. "The long ballot is the politician's ballot; the short ballot is the people's ballot." We have already noted the extreme ease with which in many states a straight ticket can be voted and the relatively much greater difficulty of voting a split ticket. When tickets are to be split effectively, it can best be done under the direction of active political workers. Reformers consider the voting of a split ticket to be the beginning of civic virtue. As a matter of fact, when done independently it avails little, because personal preferences vary and the result spread over the surface of a large ballot is neutralized and lost.

Too much  
voting dis-  
franchises  
the electo-  
rate

Under these conditions the rank and file of independent voters lose the power to reward the good or to punish the bad public servants, except perhaps in the case of well-known candidates and of very conspicuous offices. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is none the less true that because of too much voting the electorate is disfranchised. And consequently office holders come naturally to disregard the interests of the people, and to accept the dictation of the organization, of that "invisible government" that can and does make or unmake them.<sup>1</sup>

Short-ballot  
principle

In opposition to these conditions the short-ballot principle is stated as follows:

First, That only those offices should be elective which are important enough to attract (and deserve) public examination.

Second, That very few offices should be filled by election at one time, so as to permit adequate and unconfused public examination of the candidates, and so as to facilitate the free and intelligent making of original tickets by any voter for himself unaided by political specialists.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elihu Root, *The Short Ballot and "the Invisible Government,"* an address before the New York Constitutional Convention, Aug. 30, 1915, reprinted by the National Short Ballot Organization.

<sup>2</sup> *The Short Ballot*, p. 2.



## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

A practical application of these proposals to November ballots in the state of Oregon, is outlined in the following table:<sup>1</sup>

Practical application

First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year
President and Vice-President four years.	Governor four years. <i>Appoints all state administration, and sheriffs and district attorneys.</i>	Congressman two years.	Judges.
Congressman two years.	State Auditor four years.	Three County Directors four years. <i>Appoint all other county officers.</i>	
	State Representative four years. <i>(State Senate abolished.)</i>		

The term "short ballot" is unfortunate in so far as it seems to imply that the advocates of this reform are concerned with ballot changes only. As a matter of fact, the necessary readjustments involved in changing large numbers of offices from a popularly elective to some other basis of choice, force short-ballot advocates to become advocates of many other governmental and administrative changes, some of them sweeping in character.<sup>2</sup> Of these the more important are as follows:

Other consequences of short-ballot reform

First, all the minor and uninteresting offices which now clutter up our ballots shall be made appointive. If these involve special aptitude, appointment will rest upon civil-

<sup>1</sup> *The Short Ballot*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. B. Hall, *Popular Government*, pp. 253-269.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

service examinations. In any event, the appointive officials, having themselves been chosen by short ballot, will presumably exercise their power of appointment to the public advantage.

Second, the excessively large number of administrative offices, bureaus, and commissions now common in nearly all our state governments should be consolidated according to some logical plan and in most cases be made appointive.<sup>1</sup>

Third, bicameral city councils of unwieldy membership are rapidly disappearing from American municipalities. Possibly state legislatures may follow their example in time. All popularly elective boards or commissions with large membership should be reduced in number or made appointive.

Fourth, the substitution for the traditional forms of city government of the commission and commission manager plans very greatly shortens the ballot for municipal offices.<sup>2</sup>

Fifth, the lengthening of terms of office in general makes for a short ballot and less frequent elections.

All these reforms are strongly supported as desirable on their own account and quite apart from their effect in reducing the size of the ballot. Short-ballot advocates urge them, of course, on both grounds. It will be noted that the general effect of the changes listed above is to

<sup>1</sup> In April, 1920, the New York state legislature consolidated one hundred and eighty bureaus and commissions into twenty-one departments, of which the governor appoints nineteen. *Short Ballot Bulletin*, vol. vii, no. 56, p. 4 (April, 1920); A. E. Buck, *Administrative Consolidation in State Governments*, New York Bureau of Municipal Research, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Munro, *op. cit.*, chap. xv. A list corrected to August, 1922, by G. R. Howe of the National Municipal League, contains the names of 588 commission governed cities in the United States. According to *The Story of the City Manager Plan*, issued by the National Municipal League, there were, on June 1, 1922, 201 city manager municipalities which had introduced that plan by charter or popular vote. There were in addition about thirty others which employ city managers by ordinance. The largest city manager municipalities were Akron, Dayton, Grand Rapids, Nashville, and Norfolk. In November, 1921, Cleveland voted in favor of the city manager plan to take effect in 1924.

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

concentrate authority in fewer hands. Hence the opposition cry of legislative and executive tyranny, even of "monarchy."<sup>1</sup> Of course this abuse may always develop as a result of centralization. As a matter of fact, however, the real danger of tyranny in this connection is rather that of the boss lurking behind the blanket ballots and complicated election system of the present. So far as there is any likelihood of the abuse of centralized power under the short ballot it may be met by the concurrent establishment of the recall, and possibly of the initiative and referendum, as was done in connection with the Des Moines plan of commission government and most of the later city charters of the same type. Of course the initiative and referendum, if used too freely, will result in an overloaded ballot.

The most difficult obstacle which advocates of the short ballot have to meet is the widespread conviction that frequent popular elections for the largest possible number of officers assure popular control of government. It would be difficult to name a greater fallacy than this erstwhile principle of Jacksonian democracy; nevertheless, it persists obstinately, and is affected to a surprisingly slight degree by constant proofs to the contrary developed under boss and machine rule.

Popular  
control not  
assured by  
long ballot

In spite of opposition to the short ballot as "undemocratic," there is every reason to anticipate its further triumphant march. Some measure of its success to date may be based upon the fact that there are now more than five hundred commission and two hundred commission-manager cities in the United States. It is too much to hope that with a government so complicated as that of the United States the ballots used in our general elections can be reduced to anything like the proportions of the English parliamentary ballots. But they can be reduced to a fraction of their present size with beneficent results

Gains made  
by short-  
ballot  
movement

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Brackett, "Shall We Have Monarchy or Democracy?" *Short Ballot Bulletin*, vol. iii, no. 3, p. 3 (June, 1915).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

not only to elections, but to government and administration generally.

Exaggerated  
hopes for it

It seems likely, however, that short-ballot advocates make too much of the relationship between the powers of the machine and the ballots now in use, and are too sanguine of the overthrow of bossism through the short ballot. Every other political reform from the Australian ballot on has cherished the same hope. The survival of the machine indicates that its powers are more broadly based than reformers of these various schools were inclined to admit. There can be no doubt, however, that bosses generally are opposed to the short ballot. And in its effects both upon elections and upon administration it should make the manipulation of government by political machines much more difficult.

### GERRYMANDERING

Plurality  
rule

Majority rule is commonly understood to be a democratic principle. Yet in spite of our democratic professions we make less effort to put a majority vote behind elective officials than certain countries of western Europe.<sup>1</sup> In Imperial Germany, for example, if no candidate for the Reichstag received a majority of the votes cast at the general election a second election was held not more than fourteen days later, between the two candidates who had received the highest number of votes. With very few exceptions, however, a plurality suffices to elect throughout the United States.

Minority of-  
fice holders

Given a fairly even balance between the two major parties, the result is that whenever minor parties acquire a fair degree of strength many candidates are elected with a plurality in their favor, but with a majority of the popular vote cast for their opponents. Thus for a few years following the Progressive split of 1912, a large percentage of the public officials of the country were minor-

<sup>1</sup> F. K. Krüger, *Government and Politics of the German Empire*, p. 51; E. M. Sait, *Government and Politics of France*, p. 163.

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

ity and not majority choices. Indeed this is more common under ordinary circumstances than is generally realized. It occurred in seven gubernatorial elections held in the years 1918 and 1920,<sup>1</sup> and in nine United States senatorial contests in 1916, 1918, and 1920.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the great Republican sweep of the latter year, twenty-one representatives in Congress were elected by less than a majority vote. Of course it is not possible to say what would have happened in these cases if the two runners-up had been compelled to fight it out at a supplementary election. But it is certain that those who achieve public office under such circumstances represent less than a majority of their constituents.

Inasmuch as the man with the highest number of votes wins under the plurality system, there is no tendency to take cases such as the foregoing tragically. The situation involves factors other than personal success, however, when representation in Congress or legislatures is involved. Here the plurality system works out grotesque travesties on the principle of popular representation, especially when aided by a little adroit gerrymandering. Thus in Indiana the congressional elections of 1912 and 1918 resulted as follows:

**Gerrymandering**

INDIANA CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS  
1912

Parties	Popular vote	Percentage of total vote	Seats won
Democratic .....	291,288	45.5	13
Republican .....	166,698	26.0	0
Progressive .....	127,041	19.8	0
Prohibition and scattering .....	55,807	8.7	0
Total .....	640,834	100.0	

<sup>1</sup> Arizona, Minnesota, 1918; Maryland, New Jersey, 1919; Nebraska, New York, West Virginia, 1920. *World Almanac*, 1922, pp. 444-488. The figures given in the *World Almanac* are incomplete, hence cases of minority election in addition to those here cited may have occurred.

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, 1916; Colorado, Nevada, 1918; California, Maryland, Nevada, and Wisconsin, 1920. *World Almanac*, 1921.



# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

1918

Parties	Popular vote	Percentage of total vote	Seats won
Democratic .....	251,331	44.3	0
Republican .....	306,807	54.1	13
Prohibition and scattering .....	9,273	1.6	0
Total .....	567,411	100.0	

In 1912 a proportionate distribution of the Indiana seats would have given six instead of thirteen to the Democrats, four to the Republicans, and three to the Progressives. In 1918, seven instead of thirteen would have gone to the Republicans and six to the Democrats.

Regardless of the use of the gerrymander, a party which is greatly in the minority stands little chance of getting its deserts under the plurality system. Thus in the general election of 1920 the Democrats of Pennsylvania cast 510,977 votes for representatives in Congress, or nearly 30 per cent of the total. The Republicans won thirty-five seats in Congress, the Democrats, one seat only. In the same year North Carolina Republicans cast 225,368 and Democrats 306,919 votes for Congress. The Democrats won all the seats. Cases are actually on record in which the parties with the larger vote secured the smaller number of seats. Thus in 1914 Republicans in Maine, with less votes than the Democrats, elected three of the state's four representatives. On the other hand, in 1916 Kansas Democrats with fewer votes than the Republicans nevertheless won five of the eight seats in Congress.<sup>1</sup>

Of course an easy-going commentator might say that these discrepancies even themselves up from year to year or from section to section. But differences of opinion based on sectionalism are great even as between members of the same party. A Pennsylvania Democrat, for example, resident in a great industrial center and inclined to flirt with protectionism, may find an agricultural, tariff-

<sup>1</sup> G. H. Hallett, "1920 Elections Show Need for Proportional Representation," *Equity*, Fourth Quarter, 1920.

Vagaries of  
plurality  
system

Results not  
evened up

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

for-revenue-only North Carolina Democrat very little to his liking as a representative in Congress. No easy-going theory of give and take can conceal the fact that there is a gross suppression of minorities, a palpable unfairness in such election results. Unquestionably, a large part of the prevailing apathy and disgust with politics can be traced to this source.

Without manipulation of any sort plurality elections in single-member districts are bound to develop frequent cases of misrepresentation such as the foregoing. This ever-present possibility suggests gerrymandering and gerrymandering always aggravates the evil.<sup>1</sup> The principle behind the gerrymander is quite simple.<sup>2</sup> In districting a state or city spread the majorities of your own party over all or over as many districts as possible. If you have not enough votes to control every district, concentrate the strength of your opponents in as few districts as possible, so that it will do them the least good.

Principle  
behind  
gerry-  
mander

On a small scale the process may be illustrated as follows: Given a state of sixteen counties, as diagramed below, with a total Democratic vote of 25,000 and a total Republican vote of 75,000, it is evident that, with four representatives to choose, the former party should elect one, and the latter three.

Illustration

<sup>1</sup> Although the practice was known much earlier, the name "gerrymander" was first used following the redistricting of Essex and other counties of Massachusetts in 1812 during Elbridge Gerry's administration as governor. For various stories as to the origin of the name and a brief account of some of the more notorious instances of the employment of the gerrymander, see H. F. Griffin, "The Gerrymander," *Outlook*, vol. xcvi, pp. 186-193 (Jan. 28, 1911).

<sup>2</sup> C. O. Sauer, "Geography and the Gerrymander," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xii, pp. 403-426 (Aug., 1918), shows the gerrymander to be a violation of the geographic unity of regions and indicates the possibility of equitable representation by reorganizing electoral districts on a geographic basis.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

A 1,000 D 1,000 R	B 2,000 D 2,000 R	C 3,000 D 3,000 R	D 2,000 D 3,000 R
E 2,000 D 1,000 R	F 1,000 D 1,000 R	G 1,000 D 16,000 R	H 3,000 D 2,000 R
I 1,000 D 13,000 R	J 1,000 D 14,000 R	K 1,000 D 14,000 R	L 2,000 D 1,000 R
M 1,000 D 1,000 R	N 1,000 D 1,000 R	O 1,000 D 1,000 R	P 2,000 D 1,000 R

Nevertheless by districting the state as follows:

District	I	Counties	I, J, K, G,
"	II	"	A, B, E, F,
"	III	"	C, D, H, L,
"	IV	"	M, N, O, P,

the Democrats will win three out of four seats. Of course District I is grossly larger in population than the other three, but it is impossible to plan an effective gerrymander against great odds without inequities of this character. On the other hand, the Republicans can district the state easily in such a way as to win all four seats, as for example:

District	I	Counties	A, E, I, M,
"	II	"	B, F, J, N,
"	III	"	C, D, G, H,
"	IV	"	K, L, O, P.

By way of safeguards against the gerrymander, some state constitutions provide that electoral districts shall (1)

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

be compact in form; (2) contiguous in territory, and (3) contain as nearly equal a number of inhabitants as may be. In spite of the third of these requirements, gross inequalities exist in electoral districts of every kind, from congressional to councilmanic.<sup>1</sup>

**Safeguards  
against  
gerry-  
mander**

The first and second requirements—namely, that districts shall be compact in form and shall consist of contiguous territory—do indeed prevent legislatures from tying counties together that have no boundary line in common.<sup>2</sup> With this exception every possible combination into which territory can be tortured has been tried by our legislatures, hence “shoestring,” “dumb-bell,” “saddle-bag,” and “belt-line” districts. It is always possible to find some ostensibly innocent excuse for these combinations, as, for example, that two areas which it is desired to join together have the same preponderant industries or common markets, or that counties or cities should not be divided, although as a matter of fact the latter is often done.

**Districts of  
queer shapes**

A gerrymander that is too impudent may be haled into the state courts as conflicting with the constitutional requirements noted above. But the judicial authorities are loath to interfere with the discretion of the legislature in such political matters, even if the legislature seems to have gone too far. Moreover, a decision unfavorable to a districting Act will merely restore an earlier apportionment which may also have been gerrymandered, and which as the result of shifts of population since its enactment is likely to be even more grossly unfair than the later Act. In direct legislation states the referendum may also be

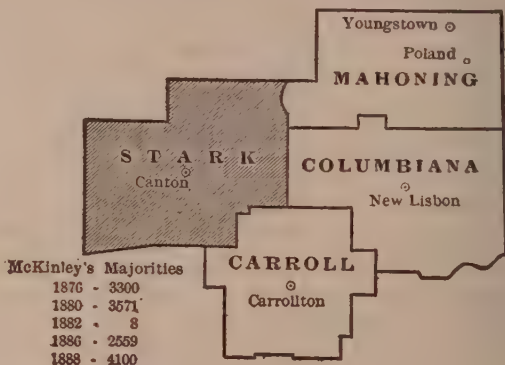
**Legal action  
against  
gerry-  
mander**

<sup>1</sup> The more extreme cases in congressional districts, population figures for 1920, are as follows: California, second, 129,357, tenth, 516,283; Illinois, fifth, 158,092, seventh, 560,434; Michigan, tenth, 198,679, first, 535,353; Missouri, eighth, 138,807; tenth, 521,008; Ohio, eleventh, 167,217, fourteenth, 439,013; Pennsylvania, fourteenth, 129,465, sixth, 543,912. *Congressional Directory*, 67th Congress, 2d Sess., Feb., 1912.

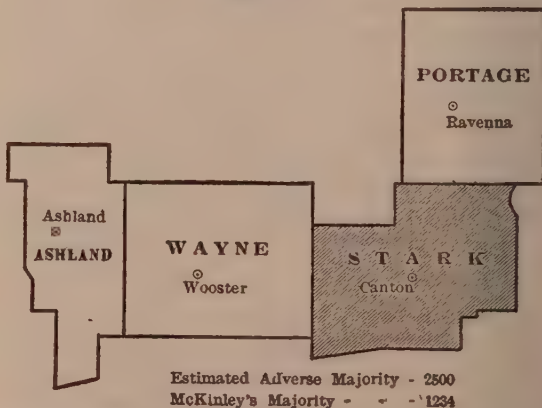
<sup>2</sup> Usually it is held that counties which merely touch each other at a given point are not contiguous. For a districting scheme that disregarded this distinction, however, see C. A. Beard, *American Government and Politics*, p. 236.

## THE GERRYMANDERING

The Normal District as  
In 1876, 1880, 1882, 1886 and 1888



The District as Gerrymandered  
In 1878



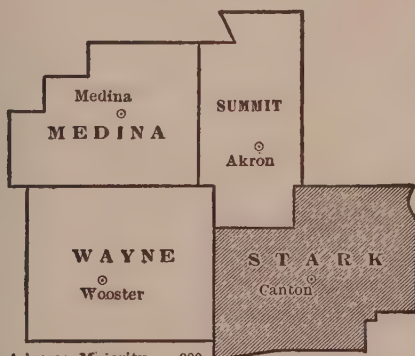
FROM "THE LIFE OF WILLIAM M'KINLEY," VOL. I, P. 82, BY C. S. OLCOTT.



# PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

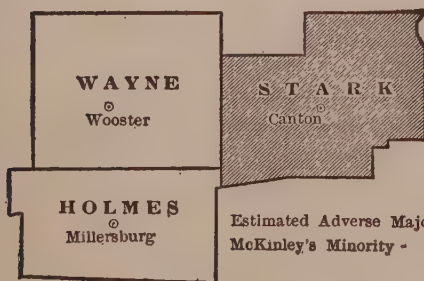
## OF MCKINLEY'S DISTRICT

The District as Gerrymandered  
in 1884



Estimated Adverse Majority - 900  
McKinley's Majority - - - 2000

The District as Gerrymandered  
in 1890



Estimated Adverse Majority 3000  
McKinley's Minority - - - 303

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

invoked against a gerrymander. This was done successfully in Ohio following a Republican redistricting Act of 1915.

### Political penalties

There are political penalties for the ranker kinds of gerrymandering, however, which are often immediate and severe. An apportionment act which is aimed against an individual may react to his advantage and against the party undertaking it. The Democratic gerrymander which deprived McKinley of his seat in Congress forced him into the governorship of the state in 1892 and thus greatly enhanced his prestige as a presidential aspirant. Even when a gerrymander is inspired by no personal animus, but merely seeks party advantage, the public reaction to the unfairness involved may be unfavorable. In the nature of the case the gerrymander may easily overreach itself. Its fundamental policy is to spread party majorities as far as they will stretch. But in so doing the party is exposed to complete overthrow if there is a slight reversion of feeling in favor of the opposition. This is precisely what has happened in several instances. Indeed, it is probable that a very large part of the political effort and adroitness spent in this country on the gerrymander have been worse than wasted.

### "Limited-vote" plan

Various devices have been employed in the United States to secure a fairer representation of minorities. Of these the simplest and crudest is the "limited vote" according to which every district elects, say, three members, voters being restricted to two votes each.<sup>1</sup> As a result the majority party regularly wins two seats and the largest of the minority parties wins the third. Unfortunately, under this plan it is easy by a bipartisan arrangement for the majority party to nominate two candidates and the principal minority party one only, leaving the voter no

<sup>1</sup> Formerly used in aldermanic elections in New York and Boston, and still employed for judges of the Supreme Court, county commissioners and auditors in Pennsylvania, and magistrates in Philadelphia (Art. 5, Secs. 12, 16; Art. 14, Sec. 7, Constitution).

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

choice on election day. The system is also defective in that it gives two thirds of the representation to the majority and one third to the principal minority party without regard to the actual proportions of their voting strength. Finally it does not take into account the claims of other smaller minority parties.

A somewhat more elaborate device has been used since 1870 in Illinois, where each district elects three members to the state House of Representatives, the voter being permitted to cumulate his votes—*i.e.*, to give two or three votes to one candidate instead of one each to three. Under this system also the larger of the two major parties nearly always secures two seats and the smaller one seat, shutting out prohibitionists, socialists, and other lesser minority parties. But cumulative voting involves the peculiar danger that if a very popular candidate is nominated by the majority party many more votes than he needs may be “plumped” to him, with the result that while his election is assured, the minority party, by a better distribution of its votes, may carry off the two seats. Under the recently drafted constitution which was voted upon by the people of Illinois, December, 1922, this system of minority representation was to be done away with. However, the new constitution was defeated by the people.

Illinois  
cumulative-  
vote plan

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## PREFERENTIAL VOTING

The preferential ballot known also as the Grand Junction, or Bucklin, plan,<sup>1</sup> represents a considerable advance over the cruder forms of minority representation. Originally introduced in 1909, by Grand Junction, Colorado, it had been adopted within nine years by more than fifty-five cities, including Spokane, Denver, Portland (Ore.), Cleveland, Jersey City, Paterson, and Newark (N. J.), Columbus (O.), and San Francisco. It is also used in

Origin and  
spread of  
the plan

<sup>1</sup> From James W. Bucklin, who invented it and secured its adoption at Grand Junction, Colorado.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

primary elections in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup>

Marking  
and count-  
ing ballots

To the right of the list of candidates on the Grand Junction ballot there are three columns, headed respectively, First, Second, and Third Choice. The voter may indicate by cross marks only one first choice and one second choice, but he may vote as many third choices as he wishes. If the count shows any candidate to have a majority of first choices, he is declared to be elected. If no candidate has a majority of first choices, each candidate's first and second choices are added together, and anyone securing a majority is declared elected. If no one secures such a majority of first and second choices counted together, each candidate's third choices are added to the sum of his first and second choices, and the election then goes to that one of the candidates having a majority or the largest plurality. According to another method of counting, if no candidate has a majority of first choices, the candidate with the lowest number of first-choice votes is counted out and his second choices are distributed among the survivors, this process being continued until a final decision is reached.

Effect of  
second and  
third choices

In sharp contrast with the plurality rule common to our elections the Bucklin preferential voting plan makes a determined effort to place a majority of choices behind the successful candidate. It is a common trick of political machines to encourage independents to divide their votes among a number of good-government candidates. By concentrating behind a cut-and-dried ticket the machine then easily carries the day under the plurality system. Under the Grand Junction preferential system it could not win so easily, for unless the machine's plurality amounted to a clear majority of first choices, the second and, ultimately, the third choices would come into play. Now the second and third choices of one good-government faction would

<sup>1</sup> *National Municipal Review*, vol. iv, p. 483 (1915); v, p. 104 (1916); vi, p. 107 (1917); vii, p. 94 (1918). One-half of the fifty-five cities adopting preferential voting are in New Jersey. Since repealed by Minnesota.

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

go almost without exception to the advantage of another good-government faction, so that, failing to win on first choices, the machine would be defeated on later choices in spite of the divisions existing among independents. Further, the preferential voting plan gives the elector a much greater range of expression. In effect the ordinary ballot asks the voter bluntly, "Who is your first choice?" as if the possibility of a second or third choice were out of the question.

On the other hand the preferential ballot suffers from two defects. One of these is that, failing to obtain a majority, it counts second choices, and ultimately third choices also, as equal in weight to first choices. Certainly this is not in accordance with the voter's intent, for in the nature of the case a first choice is held to be of greater value than a second, and a second choice of greater value than a third.<sup>1</sup> Closely related to this defect is the fact that when second choices are taken into account each voter's second choice completely neutralizes his first choice so far as those two candidates are concerned, and that when the third choices are taken into account each voter's third choice completely neutralizes his first and his second so far as those three candidates are concerned. To put it in another way, a voter naturally hopes that his first choice will win by a clear majority of first choices. If this should not occur, the voter realizes that his second choice may help the candidate to whom it is given to defeat his first choice. Hence a very large percentage of voters under the preferential plan stop with the expression of their first choice. If this practice were to become universal we would be back again on the old plurality basis.

Defects of  
preferential  
voting plan

<sup>1</sup> The Nanson system, used in Marquette and Wakefield, Michigan, weights choices by giving the election to the candidate with the lowest vote after adding together first choices as one, second choices as two, and so on, thus registering a much more accurate result. For explanation of the Nanson system in detail, see C. G. Hoag, "Effective Voting," *Sen. Doc. No. 359, 63d Cong., 2d Ses., 1914.*



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

with party tickets, and it is safe to say that if American politicians looked into the subject they would prefer this form. Under the Hare system, on the other hand, the ticket is absolutely free from party emblems or designations of any kind. Instead of the three columns of the preferential ballot the Hare system has but one column, as shown in the following sample:

### Directions to Voters:

Put the figure 1 opposite the name of your first choice. If you want to express also second, third, and other choices, do so by putting the figure 2 opposite the name of your second choice, the figure 3 opposite the name of your third choice, and so on. You may express thus as many choices as you please, without any regard to the number being elected.

Your ballot will be counted for your first choice if it can help him. If it cannot help him, it will be transferred to the first of your choices whom it can help.

You cannot hurt any of your favorites by marking lower choices for others. The more choices you express, the surer you are to have your ballot count for one of them. But do not feel obliged to express choices that you do not really have.

A ballot is spoiled if the figure 1 is put opposite more than one name.

### *Candidates*

	William J. Bryan
	Carrie Chapman Catt
	Parley P. Christensen
	James M. Cox
	Eugene V. Debs
	Warren G. Harding
	Herbert C. Hoover
	William G. McAdoo
	Leonard Wood

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Under the Hare system, polling officers in each precinct merely sort the ballots, arranging them in bundles according to first choices. On the following day the ballots from the entire ward or city are collected in some centrally located hall for the final process of counting, which is usually carried on in the presence of reporters, candidates, party leaders, and the public generally. The nature of the methods employed may be grasped most easily from the experimental election shown on the following page, based on the ballot presented above.<sup>1</sup>

Hare, or  
single trans-  
ferable-vote  
system

Five seats are to be filled. The electoral quota—*i.e.*, number of votes necessary to elect—is determined by dividing the total number of valid ballots by the number of seats plus one, in this case  $116 \div 6 = 19 \frac{1}{3}$ , which is rounded off to the next whole number above, or 20. This means simply that with a total of 116 votes, and five seats to be filled, twenty is the largest number of votes each of the five candidates can secure. A sixth candidate could receive not more than sixteen.

Electoral  
quota

With twenty as the electoral quota, only one of the nine candidates, Hoover, is elected by first choices. Indeed he has a surplus of ten votes not needed for his success. Accordingly, ten of his first-choice ballots are withdrawn at random, and transferred according to the second choice indicated thereon.<sup>2</sup> Five of them were marked for Harding, five for Wood. With his fifteen first choices the latter now has twenty votes, and is declared elected.

Transfer of  
surplus  
votes

Next the candidate with the lowest vote, Debs, is de-

<sup>1</sup> Both ballot and result sheet from *Proportional Representation Leaflet*, No. 9, March, 1921. Brief rules for counting may be found in this leaflet, also in *Proportional Representation Review*, third series, no. 62, supplement (April, 1922).

<sup>2</sup> The ten voters whose ballots are selected for transfer should be satisfied. Their first choice is successful without their help, and their ballots are now used to assist candidates next in the order of their choice. If groups of voters gathering at an election under the present system could foresee results accurately they would make the same distribution of their surplus strength as the Hare system makes for them. Meeting not as groups, but as individuals, in ignorance of the results, they necessarily waste much of their strength to make sure of the election of their favorites.

## RESULT SHEET

[Date]

For Election of..

Kept by

Number of Valid Ballots.....	116
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Number of Seats ..... 5

Quota ..... 20

	First Count	Transfer of Hoover's Surplus	Transfer of Debs's Ballots		Transfer of Christensen's Ballots	Transfer of Bryan's Ballots		
Bryan .....	8		+1	8		9	—9	Defeated
Catt .....	13			13	+4	17	+3	Elected
Christensen .....	5		+3	5	—8	Defeated		
Cox .....	14			14	+1	15		Defeated
Debs .....	4		—4	4	Defeated			
Harding .....	14	+5		19		19		Elected
Hoover .....	30	—10		20		20		Elected
McAdoo .....	13			13	+3	16	+4	Elected
Wood .....	15	+5		20		20		Elected
Ineffective Ballots ..	0			0			+2	2
Total Valid Ballots	116			116		116		116
Invalid Ballots .....	0							

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

clared defeated, and his four ballots transferred according to second choices, three to Christensen, one to Bryan. Christensen as lowest is now eliminated, his ballots going four to Catt, three to McAdoo, and one to Cox. Bryan is dropped out next, and with the transfer of his nine ballots—four to McAdoo and three to Catt—each of these receives the requisite twenty votes and is elected. Two of Bryan's ballots express no next choices and are recorded as ineffective. Cox as the lowest remaining candidate is next eliminated, and, since Harding alone is left, his election follows, completing the five seats to be filled. In short the process of election has been well described as "the *condensation* of the voters into a body reflecting their opinions truly and in the right proportions, not the *division* of the votes into winners and losers."<sup>1</sup>

Eliminations

The transfer of surplus votes as in the case of Hoover above, raises a question regarding the choice of votes to be transferred. One set of ten ballots withdrawn from Hoover's thirty might show second choices quite different from those of another set of ten. The ideal solution of this difficulty, as provided in certain rules for counting Hare ballots, is to scrutinize Hoover's entire thirty and then to select for transfer ten ballots whose second choices correspond most closely to the second choices shown to be preferred by the entire thirty. The only objection to this ideal procedure is that in actual elections with thousands of ballots to be counted it would take considerable time. It has been shown by experience in actual elections and also by mathematical computation that the variation from the results obtained by this ideal procedure are very slight when the ballots to be transferred are selected at random.<sup>2</sup> In selecting such ballots election officers take them alternately from the piles sent in from the various precincts. As a matter of fact, this simpler procedure is the one commonly followed.

Choice of votes to be transferred

<sup>1</sup> *Pro. Rep. Leaflet*, No. 4, March, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> For a more complete discussion of this point, see *Pro. Rep. Rev.*, third series, no. 62, supplement, p. 7.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

The machine under P. R.

The Hare system makes primary elections unnecessary, thus effecting a large saving in both time and money.<sup>1</sup> In Ashtabula nominations are made by petition signed by 2 per cent of the voters. Machine rule is discouraged by the Hare system, since each voter may vote against machine candidates without the least danger of wasting his vote. He knows that even if his first choice is unsuccessful his vote will still help the most available among the remaining candidates. Under the present system a small but compact machine element may control nominations and swing elections, thus securing political power out of all proportion to its real strength. Under proportional representation all that the machine element, or any other group, for that matter, can get is precisely that proportion of the seats to which its voting strength entitles it.

Other advantages

Other advantages of the Hare system have been summed up as follows: "It reduces incentives to corruption; a few crucial votes in close districts will no longer turn the scale. It makes the representation of localities as such possible, but not compulsory. It tends to allay social unrest by giving a fair hearing to all elements. It conduces to steady progress instead of to vacillation between extremes."<sup>2</sup> "A 10-per-cent fluctuation of public opinion (in a city) will produce only a corresponding change in the council, whereas under the common method a swing of 10 per cent may produce either a 100-per-cent overturn in the personnel of the governing body or no change at all."<sup>3</sup>

Criticism of P. R.

Proportional representation has been attacked on the ground that it leads to party disintegration. According to this argument the existing voting system has the advantage that it tends to place in power a definitely responsible majority party. Sometimes, indeed, it gives more seats to the majority party than it deserves. Even this is not an

<sup>1</sup> The cost of a P. R. election is a little more than that of an ordinary plurality election. But it is much less than that of a plurality election and a primary both.

<sup>2</sup> *Pro. Rep. League Leaflet*, no. 5 (Oct., 1921).

<sup>3</sup> *Short Ballot Bulletin*, vol. iii. no. 5, p. 2 (Oct., 1915).



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unmixed evil, for it enables the majority party to rule freely and strongly. If errors are made, the minority party will combat them with equal force and freedom. And if public favor shifts, the minority, now become the majority, stands ready in its turn to take the reins of government.

From this point of view the fundamental error of proportional representation is that it encourages every little faction and sect of politics to break loose on its own account. Strong majority and minority parties become well-nigh impossible. It must be admitted, however, that in those European countries which have had the longest experience with proportional representation under the list system, parties have by no means disintegrated entirely. On the other hand, there is no doubt that minorities have been encouraged greatly as a result of receiving exactly the amount of representation due them.

Does it  
cause party  
disintegration?

Under proportional representation, therefore, government majorities tend to become coalition majorities. Now coalition majorities are usually formed by a few party leaders who confer together and make compromises in secret. Also under proportional representation the leaders of certain small groups—*e.g.*, prohibitionists—may be bound to one policy only, and are therefore free to make almost any log-rolling bargain with leaders of other groups. From this point of view the fundamental error of proportional representation is that it regards the representative body merely as a mirror of public opinion while in fact it is the active will of the community which it represents.

Coalitions  
and bargains

Thus, to quote J. R. Macdonald, a system of proportional representation will exaggerate rather than remove those dangers which arise from the fact that governments may not be really representative. It is a method of election for securing the representation of fragments of political thought and desire, and for inviting those fragments to coalesce after and not before elections. . . . It is rather in accordance with the requirements of popular rule that a government should be supported by such a majority as makes it absolutely responsible for its actions, rather than that it should

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

have to effect compromises and coalitions which do not reflect popular wishes or arise from popular demands.<sup>1</sup>

Experience  
with P. R.  
in the  
United  
States

In the United States experience with proportional representation has been too brief and too limited to warrant the drawing of conclusions. From the few cities in which the system has been used most of the reports have been highly favorable. In spite of the alleged difficulty of counting ballots under the Hare system, all observers agree that it can be done rapidly and without doubt or hesitation.<sup>2</sup> Although there has been some local criticism of the new system, Ashtabula held its fourth election thereunder in November, 1921. For example, there was complaint to the effect that citizens do not yet fully understand the method of marking and counting under the Hare system. A good many voters, not all ignorant foreigners by any means, are said to spoil their proportional-representation ballots by using cross marks instead of numerals. Atkinson reports that 10 per cent of the ballots cast in Ashtabula's third P. R. election were invalid. No doubt this large percentage was due to the fact that the voter had to cast eleven other ballots in this election all marked with the familiar cross. In the Sacramento election of May 3, 1921, only 305 ballots were rejected out of 12,607. That the Hare system has given wide representation to economic and national groups and to the various sections of the city of Ashtabula is conceded. Complaint is made in certain quarters that organized labor and the Italians have secured more representation than they should have had. One observer holds that the council "is not a body that works smoothly. It lacks what may be called a sense of collective responsibility to the public."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Socialism and Government*, published by the I. L. P., pp. 164-167.

<sup>2</sup> Following the third Ashtabula election, the final count occupied only three and three quarter hours. R. C. Atkinson, "Ashtabula's Third P. R. Election," *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. ix, pp. 9-12 (Jan., 1920). It required sixteen hours to count 12,607 ballots in Sacramento, following the election of May 3, 1921. Of these, 6,159 were transferred. *Pro. Rep. Rev.*, third series, no. 59, *Supplement*, p. 8 (July, 1921).

<sup>3</sup> E. W. Crecraft, "Ashtabula's Attack on P. R. and the City Manager," *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. ix, p. 623 (Oct., 1920).

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

A very real difficulty which may hinder to some extent the further development of proportional representation in the United States has been encountered in the adverse decisions of the highest courts of two states. In a case involving the home-rule charter of Kalamazoo (*Wattles vs. Upjohn*, 211 Mich. 514, 179 N. W. 335) the Michigan Supreme Court handed down a decision, September, 1920, holding that proportional representation violated a section of the state constitution providing "that no city or village shall have power to abridge the right of elective franchise." On October 23, 1922, the California Court of Appeals for the Third District decided (*People vs. Elkus*, 39 C. A. D. 279, 211 Pacific 34, Cal.) that the Hare system of proportional representation as provided by the new Sacramento charter was unconstitutional in that it violated the voter's constitutional right to vote at all elections. The "right to vote at all elections" is held to guarantee the right to vote for candidates for all offices to be filled. In Ohio, on the other hand, the system was upheld (*Reutener vs. City of Cleveland*, Ohio Ct. App. 8th Dist., May 6, 1922) on the ground that the constitution of the state had granted plenary powers to municipalities.<sup>1</sup>

Court  
decisions  
on P. R.

On the whole, the criticisms of the Hare system are not very damaging, some of them, indeed, amounting only to the pained recognition of the fact that it works out as democratically as its advocates said it would. Compared with the known and ancient evils of the plurality system, such few defects as have been pointed out in the operations of proportional representation are of slight weight. There is every reason to wish for the new voting system a wide and thorough trial, particularly by progressive municipalities with commission or commission-manager government. If the results thus obtained prove favorable it may be ex-

Future of  
P. R.

<sup>1</sup> E. L. Bennett, "Is P. R. Constitutional?" *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. xii, pp. 288-291 (June, 1923), also notes in the same magazine, vol. xi, p. 402 (Dec., 1922), vol. xii, p. 98 (Feb., 1923), and in the *Harvard Law Review*, vol. xxxvi, p. 831 (May, 1923).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

tended to the election of state legislators and Congressmen throughout the country. Friends of the new system are confident that it will perform satisfactorily the processes both of nomination and of election at a single ballot. If so, proportional representation may prove the solution of the vexed problem of direct primaries.

### BOOK NOTES

MUCH of the most valuable and most timely literature in this field is issued by reform organizations such as the National Short Ballot Organization, secretary, Richard S. Childs, with offices at 8 West 9th Street, New York city; and the Proportional Representation League, secretary, Clarence G. Hoag, with offices at 1417 Locust Street, Philadelphia. This literature should be made available on library reserve shelves or students may be encouraged to procure it for themselves. Classes or student organizations interested in political subjects will also do well to invite speakers representing these organizations to address them.

The short ballot is fortunate in possessing two such admirable expositions as R. S. Childs, *Short Ballot Principles* (1911), and A. M. Kales, *Unpopular Government in the United States* (1914).

On the gerrymander the most thorough discussion is E. C. Griffith, *Rise and Development of the Gerrymander* (University of Chicago Thesis, 1907). An excellent brief discussion of this topic may also be found in P. S. Reinsch, *American Legislatures and Legislative Methods* (1913), pp. 199-213. Students should secure copies of the *Congressional Directory* and of the legislative manual of their state, in the apportionment maps of which they can search for examples of this practice.

B. F. Moore, *History of Cumulative Voting and Minority Representation in Illinois* (University of Illinois Studies, 1909), is a thoroughgoing study of these devices

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

in the state which has had the most extended experience with them.

In its field \* J. H. Humphrey, *Proportional Representation* (1911), is the most detailed and authoritative work, Appendix VI of which discusses exhaustively the mathematical theory involved in Proportional Representation. J. R. Commons, *Proportional Representation* (2d ed., 1907), is of great value on the earlier development of the movement.



## CHAPTER XVII

### INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

Various duties of the electorate

IN earlier chapters we have noted the various duties devolved upon the electorate—first, by the elective process itself, and, second, by the making of nominations under the direct-primary system. At about the same time that direct primaries were being introduced a third duty was imposed upon the electorates of many states by the adoption of various forms of direct legislation.

"I. and R."

Under purely republican government, lawmaking is wholly the work of representatives of the people. All forms of direct legislation have one element in common, namely that the people, or rather the electorate, may participate directly in the making of laws. Thus by the referendum a bill which has already received the approval of the legislative body may be overthrown by popular vote. And the initiative is essentially a device whereby the electorate may enact legislation against the will of the legislature. Thus the former is "a bit in the mouth, the latter a spur on the flanks of the legislative steed."

Logically distinct; commonly adopted together

While often coupled together in ordinary speech, and abbreviated jointly as the "I. and R.," the initiative and referendum are easily distinguishable in logic, and in practice may exist separately. Maryland and New Mexico, for example, have the legislative referendum, but not the initiative. During the earlier stages of the struggle for their adoption arguments were often advanced to show that, while the referendum was undesirable, the initiative was positively dangerous and revolutionary. Nevertheless, with few exceptions the two have been adopted or rejected together throughout the United States.

## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

Our federal lawmaking process, both constitutional and statutory, has remained purely representative—that is, the electorate as such has nothing to do with it. In our states, on the other hand, direct legislation exists in two forms—first, as applying to Constitution making or amendment, and, second, as applying to ordinary legislation. The second of these two forms is largely used in local governments, especially in cities with commission or city-manager charters.

Forms of  
direct legis-  
lation

### DIRECT LEGISLATION: CONSTITUTIONAL

Amendments to state constitutions were proposed originally in three ways, but with the few exceptions noted below approval of the electorate is always required for their adoption.<sup>1</sup>

Amendment  
of state con-  
stitutions

(a) The first way in which constitutional amendments may be proposed is by constitutional convention. In New Hampshire this is the only authorized method of amendment. The constitutions of three fourths of the states provide for it either expressly or by implication. In all but one of the remaining twelve states, it is the generally accepted view that the legislature may call a constitutional convention in spite of the fact that the existing constitutions are silent on the subject.<sup>2</sup> It is becoming an almost invariable rule that the work of constitutional conventions must be submitted to the people for ratification. The only exceptions in the last quarter century occurred in Virginia (1902), and Louisiana (1913, 1921). America may claim credit for the invention of this form of referendum, the first case on record being the adoption of the constitution of Massachusetts in 1780.

(b) Second, constitutional amendments may be pro-

<sup>1</sup> J. W. Garner, "Amendment of State Constitutions," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. i, pp. 213-247 (Feb., 1907).

<sup>2</sup> In Rhode Island the supreme court has held that since the constitution of that state makes no provision for a constitutional convention, there is no legal way in which such a convention can be held. Ogg and Ray, *Introduction to American Government*, p. 565; 14 R. I. 649 (1883).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

posed by the legislature in every state except New Hampshire. In every state except Delaware amendments so proposed must be submitted to popular vote. With the exceptions noted constitutional amendments originating either with legislatures or with constitutional conventions go before the electorate automatically, no petition or other effort being necessary to secure their submission. Referendum votes of this kind are commonly designated as compulsory or obligatory.

(c) In 1902, Oregon adopted a third method of constitutional amendment, that of popular initiative, which has subsequently been introduced in fourteen other states. This method requires the collection of the signatures of a certain number or percentage of qualified voters to a petition. If upon compliance with this requirement the proposed amendment goes at once to the people for final decision, it is known as the direct initiative. If, on the other hand, the petition is referred to the legislature for acceptance or modification before final action, it is known as the indirect initiative.<sup>1</sup> All fifteen of the states having the constitutional initiative are located west of the Mississippi, except Massachusetts, Michigan, and Ohio. It is significant that the former two have accepted it in the indirect form.

### DIRECT LEGISLATION: STATUTORY

Extension  
of statutory  
I. and R.

Although the constitutional referendum is an American invention, the statutory initiative and referendum as adopted by our states beginning with South Dakota in 1898, were imitated from Swiss models—a clear “case of democratic contagion,” in the words of Professor Rap-

<sup>1</sup> States having the constitutional initiative, with dates of adoption, are as follows (those with the indirect form italicized): Arizona, 1911; Arkansas, 1910; California, 1911; Colorado, 1910; *Massachusetts*, 1918; *Michigan*, 1908; Mississippi, 1914; Missouri, 1908; Nebraska, 1912; Nevada, 1904; *North Dakota*, 1914; Ohio, 1912; Oklahoma, 1907; Oregon, 1902; *Utah*, 1903. In Mississippi the operation of the initiative was suspended until the official declaration of its adoption was made by the state supreme court in 1917. Michigan changed to direct form in 1913.

## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

pard. Following the initial action of South Dakota the progress of direct legislation was slow until 1908. From the latter year to 1914, inclusive, however, fourteen states introduced the statutory initiative and referendum. Since 1914 there have been only two adoptions, both closely restricted in operation. Twenty-two states now have the statutory initiative and referendum, but the movement in favor of direct legislation seems to be at a standstill, for the present at least.<sup>1</sup> The Illinois constitutional convention of 1920 was distinctly opposed to any form of the initiative and referendum.<sup>2</sup> Only five of the twenty-two I. and R. states are east of the Mississippi.

Regardless of sectional lines, however, the initiative and referendum have been widely adopted by cities, particularly in connection with the commission and city-manager plans of municipal government. In a few states also the legislative and administrative actions of counties and other local government districts are made subject to popular vote.

I. and R. in  
local govern-  
ment

With the large legislative output characteristic of American states and cities, it was inevitable that the statutory referendum should take the facultative or optional form;

Optional  
referendum  
petitions

<sup>1</sup> States having the statutory initiative and referendum, with dates, as follows: South Dakota, 1898; Utah, 1900-17; Oregon, 1902; Nevada, 1904-12; Montana, 1906; Oklahoma, 1907; Maine, Missouri, Michigan, 1908; Arkansas, Colorado, 1910; California, New Mexico (referendum only), Arizona, 1911; Idaho, Ohio, Nebraska, Washington, 1912; Mississippi, North Dakota, 1914; Maryland (referendum only), 1915; Massachusetts, 1918. The following states have the statutory but not the constitutional initiative: South Dakota, Utah, Montana, Maine, Idaho, and Washington. In New Jersey the constitution (art. iv, § vi, 4) provides that the legislature shall submit questions involving the creation of state debts for civil purposes in excess of \$100,000 to popular vote. Some of the direct legislation states also have constitutional provisions requiring the submission of certain questions to popular vote without popular petition; others permit the legislatures to refer questions to the people without petition.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xv, p. 258 (May, 1921). Illinois has a "Public Opinion System," established in 1901, the votes taken under which are advisory merely. Experience with purely advisory votes of this sort shows that the electorate, realizing their futility, takes little interest in them. For discussion of a proposed advisory vote system in Indiana, coupled with a "Statement No. 1" and "No. 2" device, see *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. ix, p. 558 (Aug., 1915).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

in other words, that it should operate only upon petition signed by a certain number or percentage of voters. Requirements of this character should be large enough to prevent constant interference with legislation by small minority groups. On the other hand, it is possible to make the stated number or percentage of signatures so high that recourse to the referendum would be practically impossible. As between these two extremes the actual percentages, based upon the vote cast for some specified office, such as governor or secretary of state at the last preceding election, range for the statutory referendum from 5 to 10 per cent, the tendency being toward the higher requirement.<sup>1</sup> For referendum petitions Maine and Maryland each make a flat requirement of ten thousand signatures; Massachusetts of the same number in case the law is not to be suspended pending the vote, and of 15,000 signatures if suspension is requested. On the basis of the presidential vote of 1920 these requirements amount to a little more than 5 per cent in Maine, 2.3 per cent in Maryland, and 1 per cent in Massachusetts. Under manhood suffrage in the presidential election of 1916 the corresponding percentages would have been 7.3 per cent for Maine, 3.8 per cent for Maryland, and 1.9 per cent for Massachusetts.

### Initiative petitions

In the nature of the case the initiative, whether constitutional or statutory, must start out with a petition. The percentages fixed are usually higher than those required for referendum petitions. For constitutional amendments they range from 5 per cent in South Dakota to 25 per cent in North Dakota. For statutes from 8 to 10 per cent are ordinarily required. Ohio permits a bill to be brought before the legislature (indirect legislative initiative) by a

<sup>1</sup> C. O. Gardner, "Problems of Percentages in Direct Government," *American Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. x, pp. 500-514 (Aug., 1916). With the exception of Maine all states required 5 per cent for referendum petitions prior to 1911, but since that date Ohio and Washington fixed 6 per cent, and Nevada, Nebraska, and North Dakota, 10 per cent. In local governments referendum percentages run 5 or more per cent in excess of state referendum requirements. It is, however, easier to get signatures in cities than in rural districts.



## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

3-per-cent petition. If the legislature refuses to act favorably upon it an additional 3 per cent is required to force its submission to the electorate. Massachusetts has a somewhat similar arrangement requiring 20,000 signatures for the first step, and 5,000 additional for the second. In Maine a statutory initiative petition must be signed by 12,000 voters. Massachusetts requires 25,000 signatures for a constitutional initiative.

Although relatively low percentages are fixed by rural Western states, it is markedly difficult to procure them. On the other hand, the higher requirements fixed in states with a considerable urban population are more easily met. Along with the tendency to increase percentages noted above, there is a tendency to require a considerable geographical distribution of signatures. Thus the Nebraska amendment of 1912 requires 5 per cent in each of two fifths of the counties, and the North Dakota amendment of 1914, 10 per cent of the voters in a majority of the counties of the state.

Distribution  
of signa-  
tures

As between percentage and absolute number requirements the latter are more definite, but the former have the advantage of keeping pace with increases in the size of the electorate. When large increases take place a fixed requirement becomes relatively much easier to meet. Thus 25,000 signatures, the maximum initiative requirement of Massachusetts, would have amounted to 4.7 per cent of the presidential vote cast in that state in 1916. It is, however, only 2.5 per cent of the vote cast four years later after women were enfranchised. Whether or not it was the intention of those who enacted the Massachusetts amendment to set up the easiest requirements as to petitions in the United States, exactly this result has followed since the establishment of woman suffrage.<sup>1</sup>

Percentage  
and absolute  
require-  
ments

As we have already noted, direct-primary petitions are usually circulated by candidates, their agents, or campaign committees. They are inspired by personal self-interest

Persons  
and groups  
circulating  
petitions

<sup>1</sup> G. H. Haynes, "How Massachusetts Adopted the Initiative and Referendum," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xxxiv, pp. 454-475 (Sept., 1919).

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to a degree leading at times to sharp practice and crime. Initiative and referendum petitions deal with issues, and hence the immediate personal ambitions of their backers are not enlisted to so great an extent. Nevertheless, the same abuses occur and the same legal safeguards are necessary, as in the case of nominating petitions.<sup>1</sup> Initiative and referendum petitions are circulated either by permanent bodies such as reform organizations or labor unions, or by individuals or committees acting on their own account or for bodies formed for the purpose of pushing certain measures. Actual solicitors of signatures may contribute their services for the good of the cause or they may be hired agents specializing in this kind of business. Undoubtedly many persons sign petitions thus presented to them without due consideration, out of complaisance or, it may be, merely to get rid of the solicitor. On the other hand, many voters are as conscientious in the performance of this as of their other public duties.

Because of the perfunctory and commercialized character of much of the work connected with the securing of signatures it has been suggested that petitions should not be circulated, but should be left in some centrally located place where voters might have access to them. "Each signer should be sufficiently interested to go to some public office and sign the petition, not wait to have it shoved into his hand with a 'sign here' from a five-cents-a-name getter."<sup>2</sup> It is as hard to quarrel with this counsel of perfection as with its twin brother, namely that "office should seek the man, not the man the office." If adopted, such a rule would effectually bar many measures from the ballot, unless at the same time the number of signatures required was greatly reduced. Or at times when exceptionally interesting issues came up it would lead to the organizing on a

Proposed  
restriction  
on the cir-  
culation of  
petitions

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Coker, "Safeguarding the Petition in the Initiative and Referendum," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. x, pp. 540-545 (Aug., 1916); and W. A. Schnader, "Proper Safeguards for the Initiative and Referendum Petition," *ibid.*, pp. 515-531.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by J. D. Barnett, *The Operation of the Initiative, Referendum and Recall in Oregon*, p. 213.

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large scale of every possible means of transporting voters to the offices where petitions were left for signature.

Instead of the expenditure of money and effort in large amounts to secure signatures, it has been suggested that proponents of a measure should be permitted to have it submitted to the people upon deposit of a sum sufficient to send to every voter in the state explanations and arguments on the subject.<sup>1</sup> If the measure was adopted at the polls the money might be returned to the contributors. Without the remission of signatures this proposal is partly realized already in those states which require proponents of measures to pay part of the cost of publicity pamphlets.

Proposed  
substitute  
for petitions

Taking the country as a whole, requirements as to petitions have not been so onerous as to prevent free use of the initiative and referendum. From the date of the first adoption of the constitutional initiative down to the end of 1921, 175 cases of recourse to it have occurred in the fourteen states where it exists. During the same period 249 amendments originated by the legislature were submitted in the same states. In the case of initiative amendments rejections amounted to 64 per cent; in the case of legislative amendments to 50.6 per cent. From 1900 to the end of 1921 amendments submitted to popular vote in all the states and from all sources—constitutional conventions, legislatures, and initiative—numbered more than 1,750, of which 60 per cent carried.<sup>2</sup> The above figures do not take into account the statutory initiative and referendum. Comprehensive figures are not available in the latter field, but in the election of November, 1920, there were in all the states 26 cases of the statutory initiative and 28 cases of the statutory referendum, as compared with 131 constitutional amendments voted on the same day.

Use of  
I. and R.

Amendment of state constitutions is a seasonal industry.

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States*, p. 421.

<sup>2</sup> C. Kettleborough, "Amendments to State Constitutions, 1919-1921," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xvi, pp. 245-276 (May, 1922); H. W. Dodds, "The Initiative and Referendum in the Elections of 1920," *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. x, pp. 232-239 (April, 1921); Ogg and Ray, *op. cit.*, pp. 560-571.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Amendment  
of state  
constitu-  
tions

Thus the number of amendments submitted to vote of the people in the various states numbered 37 in 1919; 237 in 1920; and 46 in 1921. The tendency is strong to avoid special elections and submit them at the regular November elections in even numbered years. This practice has the advantage of avoiding expense, but it has the decided disadvantage of adding to the length of a ballot already at its maximum with names of candidates for national, state, and local offices.

Mass use  
of I. and R.

Figures dealing with the country as a whole are useful to convey an impression of the mass use of the initiative and referendum, but they are apt to convey an exaggerated impression of the difficulties imposed upon the voter at a single election. That these are monumental at times there can be no question.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Ohio Constitutional Convention of 1912 and the Nebraska Constitutional Convention of 1920 each placed forty-one amendments before the voter to be decided at a single election. Without attempting to disparage the difficulties of the task thus shouldered upon the voters, it is nevertheless worth noting that there is apt to be little difference of opinion about most of the questions submitted by a constitutional convention. In the Ohio case of 1912 all but eight of the amendments carried; in the Nebraska case of 1920, all forty-one carried.

Overbur-  
dened  
ballots

Even without constitutional conventions, however, a ballot may be pretty heavily burdened at times with legislative and initiative amendments, plus statutory initiative and referendum proposals, plus, finally, local ordinance initiative and referendum proposals. The Portland, Oregon, ballot of November 1920, referred to above, actually contained every one of these elements in addition to a heavy list of candidates for national, state, county, and municipal offices. In the election of the same date the ballots of South Carolina with thirty-five questions, of California with twenty, of Missouri with fifteen, of Mon-

<sup>1</sup> R. E. Cushman, "Recent Experience with the Initiative and Referendum," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. x, pp. 532-539 (Aug., 1916).

## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

tana with eleven, and of Colorado and Oregon with ten each, were also too heavy. The figures do not include local—*i.e.*, municipal and county—referendum and initiative proposals. However, twelve states had ballots without a single state-wide question; twenty-three states had ballots with less than five each; and six states had ballots with between six and ten each. Taking the country as a whole, therefore, it is not the case even in presidential elections that the ballots are overloaded with initiative and referendum proposals in more than a quarter or a third of the states.

Even in those cases where a ballot is overloaded it by no means follows that the ease with which petitions may be circulated is to blame for that condition. A large proportion of the questions submitted are placed before the electorate by constitutional conventions or legislatures. Of the measures voted on in 1920, two thirds were of this character, only one third having been placed upon the ballot by popular petition. Of the forty-eight measures on the famous California ballot of 1914, twenty-two were placed there by the legislature. In most of the states which complain of overloaded ballots, the real cause of the difficulty is to be found not in the manner of submitting amendments, but in the fact that their constitutions are abnormally long and detailed. Such constitutions contain much legislation that is really of statutory rather than of constitutional importance. Development of new needs due to the growth of population and business forces constant and numerous changes which under existing provisions must go to the people for final decision.

One way of meeting this difficulty would be to exempt constitutional amendments adopted by conventions and legislatures from popular vote except in those cases where sufficient opposition was manifested by petitions against them—in other words, to substitute the optional for the compulsory referendum in this field. A more fundamental solution would involve the rigorous shortening and simplification of the constitutions themselves. The latter

Responsi-  
bility for  
this condi-  
tion

Proposed  
solutions



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

method involves rather sweeping changes in state government, particularly an improvement in the character of legislatures.

Public interest in direct legislation

No question regarding direct legislation is more important than the amount of public interest taken in it, as shown by the vote on various issues. For 1920, participation on initiative-and-referendum measures may be compared with the presidential vote, the highest available standard. On this basis out of 218 measures submitted, 58 received a vote amounting to less than 50 per cent of the presidential vote in the same state. Of these 58 measures, however, 35 were on the ballot of South Carolina. All were measures of small and almost exclusively local importance, and all were carried with a vote equal to about 17 per cent of the presidential vote of the state.<sup>1</sup> Other states showing low percentages of participation in 1920 were Colorado, Idaho, Maryland, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Utah. Opponents of the initiative and referendum are accustomed to make much of the low percentages sometimes recorded on measures. The argument applies with equal force, however, to those not infrequent cases in which members are elected to legislatures with less than a majority vote behind them.

Percentage participating in I. and R. votes

With a single exception all 58 of these cases of low participation in 1920 occurred in connection with measures referred automatically to the people—that is, constitutional amendments adopted either by constitutional conventions or by legislatures.<sup>2</sup> With a few unimportant exceptions the vote of 1920 abundantly confirms the conclusion reached by an earlier investigation, namely that people take more interest in questions requiring the preliminary circulation of petitions than in questions which are referred to them without any action on their part. Thus

<sup>1</sup> See Kettleborough, *op. cit.*, p. 265; Dodds, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> The single exception occurred in the case of a statutory referendum abolishing the direct primary for nomination to certain offices in Nebraska, on which the vote, 49,410 in the affirmative, 133,115 in the negative, amounted to 38 per cent of the presidential vote.

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taking all state-wide measures voted upon in the United States at the election of November, 1920, we find a participation (considering the presidential vote as 100 per cent), according to kind of measures as follows:

Constitutional amendments, initiated by	
popular petition .....	80.9 per cent
Statutes, initiated by popular petition..	80.6   “
Statutes referred to the people by popular	
petition .....	74.4   “
Constitutional amendments referred with-	
out petition .....	60.4   “

The average participation for measures of all classes was 67.2 per cent.<sup>1</sup> As compared with similar percentages worked out for earlier years these results show that the electorate is meeting the tasks imposed by the initiative and referendum with increased zeal.<sup>2</sup>

A very remarkable record was made by North Dakota in 1920. Each of five legislative measures placed upon the ballot of that state by direct initiative received a vote equal to 109 or 110 per cent of that cast for the Presidency in the same election. These measures were aimed at cherished policies of the Nonpartisan League, hence the phenomenal participation. All were carried by majorities ranging from eight to sixteen thousand out of a total vote of two hundred and twenty thousand. Three of them dealt with banking policies, one of which prohibited the Bank of North Dakota from lending on real estate to any but actual farmers. One permitted publication of private legal notices in other than the official paper of the county. And one restored certain powers to the superintendent of public instruction. Three amendments proposed by the

High per-  
centages

<sup>1</sup> These percentages are based upon figures given by H. W. Dodds, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. R. E. Cushman's excellent "Analysis of the Popular Vote on Constitutional and Legislative Proposals in the General Election of 1914," *Supplement, New Republic*, vol. ii, no. 18 (March 6, 1915); also W. F. Dodd, *Revision and Amendment of State Constitutions*, p. 275; and by the same author, *State Government*, chap. xix; E. P. Oberholtzer, *Referendum in America*, pp. 166-169.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

legislature in North Dakota also registered a participation ranging from 90 to 97 per cent of the presidential vote. Another striking record was the 98-per-cent vote resulting in favor of a trunk highway system in Minnesota. In Michigan an amendment making school attendance compulsory between five and sixteen years of age and abolishing parochial schools was defeated after a bitter fight by a vote of 610,699 to 353,817, which amounts to 92 per cent of the presidential vote cast the same day. For all forms of direct legislation the participation in the election of 1920 as stated above was 67.2 per cent as compared with the presidential vote, in the same states, or to put it in other terms, for every three votes on the Presidency in that year there were two voters on each of the measures submitted to the electorate in direct legislation states.

### Use of money

Charges are sometimes made that selfish interests spend large sums of money to secure a favorable vote on initiative and referendum measures. In the campaign over the Michigan anti-parochial school amendment mentioned above, \$300,000 was alleged to have been spent for, and \$500,000 against, its adoption.<sup>1</sup> Such cases, however, are exceptional. According to a news report of August, 1923, a special committee of the California Senate recently reported that \$1,081,784 had been spent on the seven most important initiative and referendum measures at the last election. Considering the number of voters to be reached in that state, however, this amount cannot be considered excessive. Direct-legislation measures never involve so many interests, nor do they enlist personal ambitions so directly, as do general-election campaigns involving a large number of candidacies. Propagandists for such measures may spend considerable sums for "educational purposes," but they are seldom accused of buying votes. Nevertheless, the states are beginning to apply the principles of the Corrupt Practices Acts in this field. Thus California requires that all persons and organizations expending money for or against referred measures shall file a

<sup>1</sup> *World Almanac*, 1922, p. 458.

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statement within twenty days after the election.<sup>1</sup> These statements are to be made public. Violations are made subject to a fine of \$1,000.

Among the many matters voted upon in the United States at the November election of 1920, those of a financial character were the most numerous. Proposed salary increases for public officials were voted down in eight states. On the other hand, bond issues to pay a bonus to veterans of the late war carried in three states.<sup>2</sup> Bond issues or special taxes to provide for good roads were also carried by large majorities in six states. Provisions for an income tax carried in North Carolina but failed in three other states. Single-tax amendments failed in California and Oregon, and excess condemnation in Michigan. New York adopted an amendment providing that state bonds be issued in serial form. An amendment providing for a tax levy to pension the blind proved very popular in Missouri. In Oregon an initiated amendment fixing the legal rate of interest was voted down by a large majority.

Financial  
measures  
voted on in  
1920

A large number of measures of a political character were also voted upon at the same election. Although already a part of the Constitution of the United States through the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment woman suffrage appeared as a hang-over on the ballots of four states, carrying by large majorities in all of them.<sup>3</sup> Absent voting was approved in Michigan and Missouri, but was defeated in California. Compulsory voting failed in Oregon. In Nebraska a statute abolishing the direct primary and substituting the party convention for nominations to a number of important state offices was called before the people by referendum petition and defeated by a vote of 133,115 to 49,410. Arkansas extended the scope of the referendum to include appropriation bills and local

Political  
measures

<sup>1</sup> Cal. L. 1921, chap. 583. Cf. also, V. J. West, "1921 Legislation on Elections," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xvi, p. 464 (Aug., 1922).

<sup>2</sup> Maine, Missouri and South Dakota. Also in special elections during the following year in Michigan and Oregon. Mississippi adopted an amendment providing for pensions for Confederate veterans.

<sup>3</sup> Arkansas, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota.

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measures, and increased slightly the number of signatures required for initiative and referendum petitions. California voted down a proposal of the latter character, and Nebraska, at a special election in September, reduced the percentages required in that state. A proposal to call a constitutional convention carried in West Virginia and failed in California. West Virginia voted for and Oregon against divided legislative sessions. In New Hampshire an amendment giving the governor power to veto separate items in appropriation bills received a decisive majority of the popular vote but failed to secure the two thirds necessary for adoption.

Miscellaneous measures voted on in 1920

Among direct legislation projects of a miscellaneous character in the 1920 election may be mentioned the Michigan amendment already referred to, abolishing parochial schools and making public-school attendance compulsory, which was defeated by an overwhelming majority. On the other hand, a compulsory-education amendment carried in Virginia by an even more emphatic vote. An amendment empowering the legislature to fix the hours of labor was adopted by a small majority in Michigan. Prohibition enforcement acts carried in Missouri and Ohio, but were defeated in California and South Dakota, the vote being heavy in all cases. The vote on this measure in Ohio, 1,050,045 in favor of to 773,226 against prohibition enforcement, is interesting especially as compared with the vote on state-wide prohibition a year earlier which was defeated, 496,786 to 454,933. In Massachusetts a "light wines and beer" Act, futile under the circumstances except as a test of public opinion, was approved by a vote of 442,215 to 432,951, representing a participation as compared with presidential suffrage of 88 per cent. This Act, which passed both legislative houses, but had been vetoed by the governor, raised the alcoholic content of nonintoxicating liquors from  $\frac{1}{2}$  of one per cent to  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent.

California  
"Quack  
Quartette"

In California two measures directed against foreigners, one an initiated anti-alien land law and the other an alien poll-tax amendment, were carried by heavy votes which



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reflected the prevailing Anti-Japanese sentiment. The ballot of the same state also carried four measures dubbed by their opponents the "Quack Quartette," all of which failed. One of these prohibited compulsory vaccination, another prohibited vivisection, the third established a separate board of chiropractic examiners, and the fourth was an act regulating the use of narcotic drugs, which was alleged to be unfair to the osteopaths.<sup>1</sup> An anti-vaccination amendment was also defeated in Oregon, and a chiropractic bill in Colorado.

Incomplete as they are the above citations may serve to convey some idea of the scope of the direct legislation measures now being brought before the people of many states for decision at every election. Manifestly the value of the popular verdict depends upon the extent of popular information on the issues thus presented. Newspapers are helpful in this connection, but they are likely to confine their attention to the more sensational questions. Especially when a long list of measures is submitted this source of information is very unsatisfactory. Publication in newspapers of the text of measures to be submitted is required by law in a number of states, but usually such publication attracts little attention.

Newspapers  
and the  
I. and R.

## PUBLICITY PAMPHLETS

To meet the need for more complete data, particularly for arguments, pro and con, twelve states have passed laws providing for official bulletins of information, more commonly known as publicity pamphlets or voters' text-books.<sup>2</sup>

Preparation  
and distri-  
bution

<sup>1</sup> T. H. Reed, "Popular Legislation in California, 1920," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xv, p. 386 (Aug., 1921).

<sup>2</sup> Measures pamphlets should be distinguished from candidates pamphlets, described in chap. xiii. The states which have enacted laws providing for measures pamphlets, with dates, are as follows: Oregon and Montana, 1907; Oklahoma, 1908; California, 1909; Arizona, 1912; Colorado, Nebraska, Ohio, and Washington, 1913; Utah, 1917; North Dakota and Massachusetts, 1918. In Colorado, however, the Act was made conditional upon the repeal of a section of the constitution conflicting with it, and, as this has not been done, no pamphlets have been issued. In

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Oregon, which was the pioneer in this as in so many other political fields, limited the presentation of arguments in favor of initiated measures to the persons or groups responsible for bringing them before the public. Otherwise the presentation of arguments was left without restriction. As a very unfortunate consequence the publicity pamphlets of Oregon and of other states which follow the same plan frequently appear with arguments on one side only of a measure, or even without arguments on either side of certain measures. Oklahoma and California remedied this defect by requiring that one argument for and one against should accompany each measure. In the latter state the affirmative argument is prepared by the author of the bill or by some member of the legislature in which the bill was enacted. The negative argument is prepared by some member who opposed it. Massachusetts provides for the printing and sending to all voters in the state of the reports of majority and minority members of the legislative committee on each measure together with the names of the members so reporting, the vote in the legislature as a whole, and such other information and arguments as may be provided for by law.<sup>1</sup>

### Costs of publicity pamphlets

All costs of publicity pamphlets are met by the state in Oklahoma, California, Washington, Ohio, and Massachusetts. In the other five states they are divided, the state usually paying for distribution, the persons or groups submitting arguments for the cost of printing and paper. North Dakota charges a fee of \$200 per page. In the other states of this group the actual costs, which are heavy, are collected from persons or organizations preparing arguments. Of course the financial burden thus entailed acts as a bar to the submission of too many or too lengthy arguments. States which pay all costs necessarily limit the

1921, Oklahoma decided to use pamphlets only when they are cheaper than newspaper publication of the same materials. In Ohio, Oregon, and a few other states measures pamphlets are used also in city and county elections.

<sup>1</sup> *Acts and Resolves, 1919*, pp. 52-62.

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number and length of arguments. Thus in California the maximum length of an argument is five hundred words and in Ohio three hundred unless persons presenting it pay for excess space. Most of the work in connection with publicity pamphlets is intrusted to the secretary of state. This includes printing and distribution to each voter in the state a sufficient length of time before elections to permit study of their contents.

In size measures pamphlets may vary from post cards as in Ohio, to small pamphlets or treatises of considerable length. The California issue of 1920 was "a slight thing of 80,000 words."<sup>1</sup> Cost of publication and distribution is the chief argument of those opposed to publicity pamphlets, whether of the measures or candidates variety. In a message approving the law of 1917, changing from pamphlet to newspaper publication of measures and arguments, Governor R. L. Williams of Oklahoma presented a detailed comparison of the costs of the two forms of publicity. He reached a conclusion in favor of publication by two newspapers in each county unless more than five issues were to be voted upon at the same time, in which case the pamphlets would be cheaper. Under newspaper publication, however, there is no guaranty that every voter would be reached. In 1922, the California legislature appropriated \$50,000 for expenses in connection with pamphlets on the issues to be voted upon in November of that year. With over nine hundred thousand voters in the state to be reached, however, this represents a per capita cost of less than six cents.

Length of  
pamphlets

Opinion of voters and officials as to the value of publicity pamphlets seems to be about evenly divided in the states issuing them, with a slight balance in favor of their continuance.<sup>2</sup> No doubt they have a higher utility in sections of the country which do not possess a metropolitan newspaper press than elsewhere. Some of the arguments printed in states where there are no limitations as to

Value of  
pamphlets

<sup>1</sup> T. H. Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> R. W. Slocum, *Publicity Pamphlets*, Swarthmore College Thesis, 1922.

length would seem to be too prosy for the best effect. On the other hand, sarcasm or ridicule seldom makes its appearance in measures pamphlets except in connection with a few instances, such as woman suffrage or the fishing rights issue in Oregon. Most of the arguments are dignified and well expressed. In California, which has developed the best type of pamphlet, Professor Holcombe finds that a much higher percentage of participation on measures has been recorded since they have been distributed. In his opinion an official bulletin such as is used in that state "will materially help to arouse the interest and inform the intelligence of the voters."<sup>1</sup>

Methods to  
discourage  
overloading  
of ballots

Various methods have been suggested to discourage the overloading of the ballot with initiative and referendum proposals, although it must be remembered that the chief offenders in this particular are not the circulators of petitions, but legislatures and constitutional conventions. Thus it has been suggested (1) that the number of signatures necessary to place a measure on the ballot be increased; (2) that the majority necessary to adopt proposals, or certain kinds of proposals, be increased; (3) that the number of measures submitted in any one election be limited; (4) that measures once defeated be kept off the ballot for a certain number of years; and (5) that certain kinds of proposals be barred permanently as subjects of direct legislation.

Require-  
ments in ad-  
dition to  
majority  
vote

With regard to the proposal to require something more than a majority of the vote cast, it may be noted that various provisions of this kind are already in effect. In Massachusetts an initiated amendment must secure not only a majority of the votes cast on it, but also 30 per cent of the votes cast at the election. Washington Nebraska, and New Mexico have similar requirements, stipulating 33, 35, and 40 per cent, respectively. Ordinarily the lowest of these percentage requirements is not difficult of attainment. Quite the reverse is true in New Hampshire, which, for the adoption of an amendment,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 423-424. Cf. also W. F. Dodd, *State Government*, p. 521.

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requires a two-thirds vote of the electors voting thereon. As a result six amendments submitted in that state, November, 1920, which, out of a total vote averaging seventy-five thousand, received majorities of from four to twenty-one thousand, nevertheless all went down to defeat. Rhode Island requires a three-fifths vote. Five states make the requirement that a majority of the electors of the state, or a majority of all voting at the same election for some specified office, shall be required to carry an amendment.<sup>1</sup> In the former case this throws the weight of the stay-at-home element against the proposal, in the latter the weight of those who vote on candidates and neglect measures.

Naturally these requirements are fatal to many proposals which nevertheless secure a majority of the votes actually cast on them. In November, 1920, six measures out of fifteen failed on this ground in the five states having these requirements. The most striking of these cases occurred in Minnesota, where three other amendments were adopted by the requisite majority vote of 398,978 each, whereas a fourth, providing for graduated income taxes, failed in spite of a vote of 331,105 for to 217,558 against. It is evident that the more stringent of these majority requirements really foster conservatism and minority rule.

Results of  
these re-  
quirements

In some states it is possible to evade this requirement of a majority of votes cast at an election by holding special elections to pass on initiative and referendum measures. But special elections are costly affairs. The high mortality caused by this requirement at a general election is due in part to the tendency of voters to vote a straight ticket for candidates, ignoring the measures printed at the bottom of a blanket ballot. However, ten states print initiative-and-referendum measures on a separate ballot, a plan which has the advantage of calling them to the voters'

Special and  
general elec-  
tions

<sup>1</sup> Arkansas, Minnesota, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Wyoming. In Oklahoma, however, this applies only to initiated measures. Nevada makes this requirement for laws submitted under the referendum.



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attention. In Nebraska and Ohio the parties in state convention assembled are permitted to indorse or protest amendments. A single cross mark in the party column then counts for all the candidates of that party and for or against the amendments, as the convention has decided. In practice this means that the party which dominates the legislature approves the amendments it proposes. As a result enormous totals are rolled up in favor of measures of the very existence of which many voters so recorded were quite ignorant.

Ballot titles  
of I. and R.  
measures

In printing ballots all the states quote referred measures by title, most of them giving enough information in this way or by adding a brief summary, to inform the voters as to the main features of the proposals to be voted on. The ballots used in 1920, however, revealed four cases where quotation by title only was so brief as to give no real information to voters.<sup>1</sup> It is alleged that in more than one Western state the attorney-general has so phrased ballot titles as to confuse the whole issue.<sup>2</sup> The Oregon ballot gives the names of initiators as well as the substance of measures. In a few states the text of amendments is printed in full on the ballot. Iowa is a case in point. A separate sheet and differently colored paper from that of the candidates' ballot is used in that state. In Mississippi proposed amendments are printed in full at the bottom of the regular ballot.

Limitations  
on number  
of measures

Attempts to limit the number of amendments submitted may be illustrated from the constitutions of Indiana and Illinois. In the former state while an amendment or amendments "which shall have been agreed upon by one General Assembly, shall be awaiting the action of the succeeding General Assembly, or of the electors, no additional amendment or amendments shall be proposed."<sup>3</sup> Amendments may be proposed in Illinois to not more than one article of the constitution at the same session, nor to the

<sup>1</sup> Arkansas, Florida, New York, and Utah.

<sup>2</sup> Haynes, *op. cit.*, p. 466.

<sup>3</sup> Art. 16, sec. 2.

## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

same article oftener than once in four years.<sup>1</sup> In both states it has been charged that various groups have taken advantage of these provisions by combining to thrust forward unimportant measures, thus blocking the way effectually to the submission of matters of greater importance.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, groups of reformers have frequently taken advantage of the comparatively easy initiative requirements of certain states to bring forward time and again proposals in which they were interested. Single-taxers and, prior to the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment, woman suffragists, were particularly inclined to pursue this policy. From the reformers' point of view it had the decided advantage of forcing continuous discussion and repeated trials of popular sentiment on their favorite issues, all costs being borne by the state and none by themselves except for circulating petitions and making a campaign. Under the circumstances the interests attacked which felt forced again and again to spend much larger sums in their own defense, can scarcely be blamed for undertaking reprisals. Thus in California, although beaten heavily each time, a single-tax amendment was brought forward in four successive elections, the last time occurring in 1920.<sup>3</sup> On the last occasion, however, the real-estate men of the state resorted to the initiative themselves, presenting an amendment raising the number of signatures required in the case of measures affecting taxation from 8 to the prohibitive figure of 25 per cent. However, with a rather fine sense of fair play the people rejected this proposal also by a vote of 421,945 to

Repeated  
submission  
of the same  
measure

<sup>1</sup> Art. 14, sec. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, thirteen amendments were submitted at a special election in Indiana, September 6, 1921, in full compliance with the amending clause of the constitution. See *Bulletin of Information Issued by the Legislative Reference Bureau*, State House, Indianapolis, 1921.

<sup>3</sup> The popular votes on the California single-tax proposal were as follows: 1914—267,618 yes, 375,364 no; 1916—260,332 yes, 576,533 no; 1918—118,088 yes, 360,334 no; and 1920—196,694 yes, 563,503 no.

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298,347.<sup>1</sup> Oklahoma has attempted a solution of this question by requiring an unusually large number of signatures, 25 per cent instead of its ordinary requirement of 5 per cent, to bring up a measure within three years after it has been voted down.

Proposals to  
bar certain  
classes of  
measures

Provisions barring certain classes of measures permanently as subjects of direct legislation are advocated only partly in order to keep the ballot from being overloaded. A more fundamental reason for such provisions is found in the conviction that measures of the excluded classes are unsuited for popular decision either as too trivial, too local, or too technical in character, or as likely to lead to political upheaval or to encourage invasion of the essential rights of minorities or individuals.<sup>2</sup> In American experience of the use of the initiative and referendum, however, there have been few if any cases of the use of either for trivial purposes.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the overloading of ballots by local measures is by no means uncommon.<sup>4</sup> Except in the case of constitutional amendments it would seem possible to correct the latter abuse by limiting the vote on such local measures to the districts concerned.

Technical  
and radical  
measures

Direct-legislation measures too technical in character for comprehension by the mass of voters are not unknown, witness referendum votes on excess condemnation, on public utility commissions, and on the regulation of rates and quality of service of public-service corporations. So far as the danger of political upheaval resulting from the use

<sup>1</sup> T. H. Reed, *op. cit.*, *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xv, pp. 386-390 (Aug., 1921). Ohio voted down a similar proposal in 1915. C. O. Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 511.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. W. F. Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. 270, also his *State Government*, chap. xix.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Holcombe, *op. cit.*, for one case involving the introduction of a "joker" in a Colorado measure referred to the people in 1914. The "joker" was detected and the measure voted down.

<sup>4</sup> Of the thirty-three measures voted on in South Carolina in 1920, only five were general in character. But this was a highly exceptional case. The ballot used by San Francisco voters in November, 1922, contained fifty-three propositions to be voted on, thirty proposed statutes or amendments to the state constitution, and twenty-three amendments to the city charter.

## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

of the initiative and referendum is concerned, it is to be observed that the methods of direct legislation, in spite of the similarity of name, are far too painstaking and orderly to appeal to the advocates of direct action. The last objection to the initiative and referendum cited above is the likelihood of its use against minorities—racial, religious, or otherwise—or against unpopular institutions such as business corporations. In American practice it must be admitted that such cases have been highly exceptional. The Michigan compulsory education and anti-parochial schools amendment of 1920 was denounced as an attack upon a religious minority, but it was defeated at the polls. In November, 1922, however, a similar measure was adopted in Oregon. It is to be doubted whether many measures of this type will be brought forward in the future. Against all of them will be arrayed the fundamental sense of fair play underlying our constitutional guaranties of personal and property rights. In the one definite case before us, that of the Oregon measure, it remains to be seen what action the federal courts will take. The initiated bill was proposed as an amendment to the existing Oregon school law, which already contained a compulsory-attendance clause requiring attendance through the elementary grades or until children reached the age of sixteen years. Regulation and standardization of private and parochial schools to meet public-school standards was also provided for by the existing law. The purpose of the initiated bill was thus stated on the official ballot: "Requiring any parent, guardian or other person having control, charge, or custody of a child over eight and under sixteen years of age, from and after September 1, 1926, to send such child to a public school during the entire school year, excepting: (a) children physically unable; (b) children who have completed the eighth grade; (c) children between the ages of eight and ten living more than one and one-half miles, and children over ten years of age living more than three miles from a public school, except when transportation is furnished; (d) children taught by parent or private

teacher." The bill was carried by a vote of 106,996 to 93,349, according to unofficial report. The Oregon publicity pamphlet issued prior to the election of November 7, 1922, contained only one affirmative argument on this bill. It quoted a resolution adopted by the Supreme Council, A. & A. S. Rite, Grand Lodge of Oregon, A. F. & A. M., and the Imperial Council, A. A. O. Nobles Mystic Shrine, favoring the passage of the measure. Of the seven negative arguments one was submitted by the Catholic Civic Rights Association, one by the Seventh Day Adventists, one by a group of twenty-five ministers of the Presbyterian Church, one by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and others by representatives of various private schools.

Massachu-  
setts restric-  
tions on use  
of I. and R.

While most of the evils of direct legislation noted above seem to be chimerical, the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention of 1917 decided to forestall them by a series of novel restrictions upon the use of the initiative and referendum. They cannot be invoked with regard to any measure "that relates to religion, religious practices, or religious institutions; or to the appointment, qualification, tenure, removal, recall, or compensation of judges; or to the reversal of a judicial decision; or to the powers, creation, or abolition of courts."<sup>1</sup> Local legislation and specific appropriations from the state treasury were also excluded. Similarly with certain specified civil rights, *viz.*, compensation for property appropriated for public use, access to and protection of courts, trial by jury, protection from unreasonable search, unreasonable bail, and the law martial, freedom of speech and of the press, freedom of elections, and right of assembly. And by a general provision the legislative power of the people was made subject to the same limitations imposed by the constitution on the power of the legislature. In addition to all the foregoing applying to both initiative and referendum there is a spe-

<sup>1</sup> G. H. Haynes, "How Massachusetts Adopted the Initiative and Referendum," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xxxiv, pp. 455-475 (Sept., 1919). Maryland in adopting the referendum in 1915 prohibited its use against liquor legislation.



## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

cific limitation upon the former, to the effect that "neither the Eighteenth Amendment of the Constitution . . . nor this provision for its protection shall be the subject of an initiative amendment." To clinch this long list of limitations it was finally provided that "no part of the constitution specifically excluding any matter from the operation of the popular initiative and referendum shall be the subject of an initiative petition." Enthusiastic advocates of an unfettered system of direct legislation in Massachusetts are reported to be planning an early test of this "double-riveted" clause.

Closely related to the series of criticisms of direct legislation noted above is another, the validity of which, particularly as applied to the direct form of the initiative, cannot be denied. Measures which are pushed through by the latter method escape wholly the process of discussion and amendment in the legislature. They are brought forward in the first place by persons who have no official representative capacity or responsibility. To succeed finally such measures must, of course, command a popular majority, but the electorate cannot meet to discuss, and possibly to improve, them by taking minority interests into account or by adjusting the initiated proposals to the whole fabric of existing law.<sup>1</sup>

Absence of  
discussion by  
legislature

An effort is made to meet this objection by the indirect feature of the initiative adopted by California in 1911. The direct initiative introduced in that state at the same time provided that upon the presentation of a petition signed by 8 per cent of the voters a measure could be taken to the electorate for action directly—*i.e.*, without reference to or interference by the legislature. The indirect feature made it possible to bring a matter upon petition of only 5 per cent before the legislature. If the legislature accepted the initiative proposal the matter was settled without the trouble or expense of a popular vote. If the

<sup>1</sup> S. G. Lowrie, "New Forms of the Initiative and Referendum," *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. v, pp. 566-572 (Nov., 1911).

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legislature refused it, the proposal went before the electorate for final decision.

Massachu-  
setts device  
to meet this  
defect

The indirect feature of the California initiative afforded no means whereby a measure, if amended in the legislature, even with the approval of the initiators, could be enacted without submission to the electorate. In 1917 the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention endeavored to correct this defect. It provided that initiative petitions must go first to the legislature, which shall refer them to a committee. Hearings open to all parties in interest must then be held, after which the committee must draft recommendations, with majority and minority reports, and submit them to the legislature. Further details of the procedure in that body, both on initiated amendments and on initiated laws, are specified in considerable detail. By a yea-and-nay vote the legislature may submit to the people a substitute for any measure introduced by initiative petition.

Amend-  
ment by  
proposers

The most surprising innovation of the Massachusetts plan is that whereby a majority of the proposers—that is, of the first ten signers of the original petition—have the right, in case the legislature fails to take action before a certain date, to amend the measure. This action does not invalidate any of the at least 20,000 signatures attached to the petition originally. The attorney-general must certify that the amending thus done “is in his opinion perfecting in its nature and does not materially change the substance of the measure.” Next five thousand newly obtained signatures must be secured to the measure as amended, whereupon it will be submitted to the voters at the next state election. Into other details regarding submission of measures in Massachusetts it is not necessary to inquire. However, it may be noted that the initiative procedure of that state, in addition to requiring extended consideration by the legislature, also confers remarkable powers of amendment upon the first ten signers of petitions, or rather upon six of them since a majority vote binds the other four. These “decemvirs” act with the

## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

force of twenty thousand voters, whom they need not further consult, behind them. Amendment is a most elastic term even when described as "perfecting in its nature." Of course there is a slight safeguard in the requirement of 5,000 additional signatures, but this is a very easy matter, relatively, in so large an electorate as that of Massachusetts.

As we have already noted, the optional referendum resembles the initiative in that it necessitates the use of petitions. Also like the initiative the exercise of the optional referendum is subject to certain specific limitations. It would, of course, be intolerable to leave every law on the statute books open to attack by referendum at any time. For this reason the states employing it fix a limit of time beginning with the date of enactment, during which ordinary laws do not go into effect. In Massachusetts, for example, this period is ninety days. If during this time petitioners are unable to secure the requisite number of signatures, the right of challenge by referendum lapses.

Optional  
referendum  
time limits

To make this rule applicable to all measures passed by the legislature, as is actually done in Nevada, gives maximum scope to the referendum, but it destroys the power of the legislature to pass emergency Acts. It is, however, generally recognized that emergency legislation is at times unavoidable. Accordingly, a number of states have left it to the legislature to decide by a simple majority at the time of passing an Act that it belongs to the class of emergency legislation and must, therefore, go into effect at once.<sup>1</sup> In such states the constitution defines in general terms what constitutes an emergency. Thus, for example, in South Dakota the referendum is not applicable in the case of "such laws as may be necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, support of the state government and its existing public institutions." It is natural for the legislature to take the view that such a general constitutional definition of what constitutes an

Emergency  
Acts

<sup>1</sup> South Dakota, Oregon, Montana, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Washington, and Maryland.

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emergency applies to any measure which it may wish to shelter from attack by referendum. In such cases the power of the legislature is preserved but the purpose of the referendum is defeated. Still a third group of states seek to maintain the possibility of emergency legislation, but to make it so difficult that it will not be abused. This is accomplished, first, by specifying a number of kinds of measures which under no circumstances may be declared as of emergency character, and, second, by requiring a two-thirds vote of all the elected members of a legislature to declare an emergency in other cases.<sup>1</sup>

I. and R.  
likely to  
prove per-  
manent

American experience with the statutory initiative and referendum is still too limited to serve as a basis for a final judgment. Nevertheless, it is now a full quarter of a century since the first of our commonwealths entered this field. And there is abundant reason for the belief that the instruments of direct popular rule have come to stay. President Taft once expressed his sympathy for the "weary voters" of direct legislation states as they "tramp frequently to the polls in a struggle for incessant changes in the laws." His sympathy was misplaced, however kindly intended, for to the voters of these states "popular lawmaking has become something of a habit."<sup>2</sup>

Modifica-  
tions likely

While there can be little doubt as to the permanence of the initiative and referendum, there is also reason for believing that these institutions will be subjected to a considerable degree of modification in the near future. The various criticisms mentioned above and the constant efforts to reform the methods of direct legislation all point to such a conclusion. In this connection the numerous limitations characteristic of the Massachusetts type of initiative and referendum may prove profoundly significant. If they enable the people of that state to avoid the inconveniences and abuses experienced elsewhere it is prob-

<sup>1</sup> Maine, California, Arizona, and Massachusetts. On the last named cf. G. H. Haynes, *op. cit.*, p. 466. In some states the existence of an emergency is regarded as a judicial question which the courts may be called upon to decide.

<sup>2</sup> R. E. Cushman, *op. cit.*

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able that the Massachusetts formula may be adopted widely in those more conservative commonwealths which have hitherto resisted the introduction of direct legislation.

In their earlier stages the initiative and referendum enjoyed a large measure of radical support. And they provoked a corresponding measure of fear in conservative ranks. Both radicals and conservatives must now admit that their earlier views were exaggerated. Experience has shown that both can use these instruments with success. The initiative in particular has proved far less radical than its friends hoped, and the referendum has often been made to aid a conservative cause.

Radical and conservative views of I. and R.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the prophecies, once so common, that direct legislation meant the overthrow of republican institutions have disappeared from current political discussion. Experience has contradicted them and a decision handed down by the United States Supreme Court in 1912 left them without legal support. In the case of the Pacific States Telephone and Telegraph Co. *vs.* Oregon (223 U. S. 118), the court held that "whether or not a state has ceased to be republican in form within the meaning of the guaranty in the United States Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. 4, because of its adoption of the initiative and referendum, is not a judicial question, but a political one, which is solely for Congress to determine." Congress has not raised, nor at this late date is it ever likely to raise, the question thus left on its hands by the Supreme Court. Indeed it may be assumed to have answered it tacitly by admitting Senators and Representatives elected in states after their adoption of the initiative and referendum.

Prophecies of revolution unfulfilled

Any final judgment as to the initiative and referendum must depend upon the answers to two general questions: (1) have these institutions improved the quality of legislation; and (2) have they afforded a beneficial educational discipline to the electorate? <sup>1</sup> It is conceded that the technical quality of popularly initiated measures is not inferior

Final judgment on I. and R.

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Holcombe, *op. cit.*, p. 402.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

to that of the ordinary run of measures introduced by our state legislators.<sup>1</sup> But a comprehensive answer to the first of the two questions raised above is extraordinarily difficult. Perhaps all that can be ventured at the present time is Professor Dodd's admirable statement that "so far as initiated and referred measures are concerned, it is probable that some legislation has been obtained more promptly than it would have been obtained through representative legislatures. It is also probably true that in some cases representative legislatures have enacted laws that they would not have enacted but for the alternative method of legislation. It is also true in some cases that legislatures have failed to take certain action because of the fear of a popular vote."<sup>2</sup>

Educational  
effect

To the second general question regarding the initiative and referendum a much more confident answer has been returned. "The conclusive argument in favor of direct government is . . . educational. The conclusive objection to a representative or legalistic system which does not place occasional responsibility for important legislative decisions on the electorate is its dubious educational effect."<sup>3</sup>

### BOOK NOTES

ON the methods of amending state constitutions see W. F. Dodd, *Revision and Amendment of State Constitutions* (J. H. U. Studies, 1910), also his *State Government*, Ch. V (1922); A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States*, Ch. XII (1916); and the *Illinois Constitutional Convention Bulletin*, No. 1 (1920). The treatise on state government by Holcombe also contains a discussion of direct legislation (Ch. XIII), and that by Dodd a discussion of the initiative, referendum, and recall (Ch. XIX).

Much of the literature on the initiative, referendum,

<sup>1</sup> C. A. Beard, *American Government and Politics*, p. 466.

<sup>2</sup> *State Government*, p. 539.

<sup>3</sup> *New Republic, Supplement*, vol. ii, no. 18, p. 3 (March 6, 1915).

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and recall is in pamphlet form or in periodicals and has been cited as fully as possible in footnotes. For several years the quarterly journal, *Equity*, published in Philadelphia by Dr. C. F. Taylor, performed a valuable service in keeping the public informed upon the development of these institutions. Unfortunately, *Equity* has been discontinued. Its files will prove most useful to historical students, but meanwhile there is a crying need for some organ to keep readers abreast of current developments in this field. Until its suspension the *American Year Book* also presented valuable and timely information on the initiative, referendum, and recall.

The first extended systematic treatise in this field was E. P. Oberholtzer, *The Initiative, Referendum, and Recall in America* (1911), which is valuable both from the historical and critical points of view. E. M. Phelps, *Selected Articles on the Initiative and Referendum* (Debaters' Handbook Series, 1911), presents some carefully chosen materials for debate and an excellent bibliography. W. B. Munro is editor of *The Initiative, Referendum, and Recall* (1912), a compendium of papers dealing with the pros and cons of these topics. For effective criticism of direct legislation and the recall, see W. H. Taft, *Popular Government* (1913); A. L. Lowell, *Public Opinion and Popular Government* (1913); and A. B. Hall, *Popular Government* (1921).

\*J. D. Barnett, *The Operation of the Initiative, Referendum and Recall in Oregon* (1915), is a thorough and interesting study, abundantly illustrated by documents, of the experience of the state which has been the leader in this field. A somewhat briefer and earlier discussion is A. H. Eaton, *The Oregon System* (1912).

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE RECALL

Recall  
defined

THE recall has been well defined as "neither more nor less than a special election to determine whether an official shall be superseded before the ordinary expiration of his term."<sup>1</sup> As such its field of operation is completely different from that of direct legislation. On the other hand, the recall uses petitions in much the same way as they are used in initiative and referendum procedure. Also it was advocated in the same way as a means of increasing popular control over government, and has found acceptance largely in states which have been most active in the use of the initiative and referendum. For these reasons it may not be judged amiss to discuss the recall in connection with direct legislation, although it might be taken up more logically under elections.

Introduc-  
tion and ex-  
tension in  
the United  
States

Unlike the statutory initiative and referendum, the recall seems to have been invented anew in the United States, although as a matter of fact a somewhat similar institution still survives in the constitutions of various Swiss cantons.<sup>2</sup> It was first introduced in the Los Angeles charter of 1903,<sup>3</sup> and has obtained its widest distribution subsequently in municipal charters, chiefly of the home rule,

<sup>1</sup> J. D. Barnett, *The Operation of the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall in Oregon*, 1915. An earlier article by the same author in the *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. vi, pp. 41-53 (Feb., 1912), may also be consulted with profit. See also A. H. Eaton, *The Oregon System*, pp. 99-104, and articles by T. Bourne, Jr., and G. W. Guthrie in *Ann. Am. Acad. Pol. Sci.*, vol. xliii (Sept., 1912). For longer references on the recall see Book Notes under Chap. XVII.

<sup>2</sup> See the author's *Government and Politics of Switzerland*, p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> The first resort to it in the history of the country occurred in Los Angeles, Sept. 16, 1904. For details see E. Pomeroy, "The First Discharge of a Public Servant," *Independent*, vol. lviii, p. 69 (Jan. 12, 1905).

## THE RECALL

commission, and commission-manager types. In 1908 Oregon, which had already been the innovator in other political fields, made the recall applicable by constitutional amendment to elective state officers, as well as to elective officials in districts such as counties, cities, and the like. This example was followed by California, 1911; Arizona, 1911-12; Nevada, Colorado, Idaho, and Washington, 1912; Michigan, 1913; Kansas and Louisiana, 1914; and North Dakota, 1920. Of the eleven states, four expressly exempt judicial officials from recall, *viz.*, Idaho, Washington, Michigan, and Louisiana. In the other seven it is applicable to judicial on the same terms as to other officials. Colorado alone provided for the recall of judicial decisions. In Kansas the recall may be invoked against appointive as well as elective officials. The North Dakota amendment of 1920 attempts to make it apply to representatives in Congress.<sup>1</sup>

All recall laws guarantee a certain period of grace to officials subject to their provisions. Usually this is six months, dating from the beginning of their terms, but in some states it is as short as three months, and in others as long as one year. In the case of members of the legislature the term is usually fixed as five days after the beginning of the first session following their election to that body. After this period has elapsed petitions may be circulated which must give the reasons briefly upon which the demand for recall is based. To be effective they must be signed by a certain percentage of the voters of the state or district represented by the official who is under fire. Usually this is fixed at 25 per cent, a rather stiff requirement, considerably higher, it will be noted, than the percentages commonly established in the case of the initiative and referendum. In some states and cities, however, the percentage required for recall petitions is as low as 10, in others as high as 35, per cent. The Illinois requirement of 55 per cent applying to officials of commission

Period of  
grace; recall  
petitions

<sup>1</sup> See *Session Laws, N. D.*, 1921, p. 257.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

governed cities is, of course, so high as to be prohibitive.<sup>1</sup> No doubt it was inserted with this intent, for it is a favorite device of opponents of direct legislation and recall bills when their rejection *in toto* cannot be brought about, to "amend" them by fixing impossible percentages.

Special provisions regarding recall petitions

In view of the relatively greater ease of securing signatures locally it is interesting to note that the Kansas constitution requires 10 per cent for the recall of state officials, 15 per cent for the recall of officials of districts smaller than the state but greater than the county, and 25 per cent for the recall of officials of counties and smaller districts.<sup>2</sup> Similarly the California recall amendment of 1911 requires 12 per cent in the case of state officials elected at large and 20 per cent in the case of state officials elected in political subdivisions of the state.<sup>3</sup> California also endeavors to secure a degree of geographical distribution by the requirement that petitions for the recall of officials elected by the state as a whole must be circulated in at least five counties and must secure the signatures of at least 1 per cent of the voters in each.

Collection of signatures

Signatures for recall petitions are procured in much the same way as signatures for direct-primary and direct-legislation petitions. In all three the same abuses occur, and the same legal safeguards are necessary. One state only, Kansas, makes the requirement that petitions must certify that the signers voted for the officer to be recalled, or, if his position is appointive, that they voted for the elective official appointing him. With the secret ballot, however, it is obvious that this requirement can be effective only as a moral obligation. In some cases a single petition may be circulated against more than one official, and a single election used to accomplish the recall of a number of officials.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. S. Gilbertson, "Public Control under the Recall," *Annals American Academy*, vol. xxxviii, pp. 833-838 (Nov., 1911); and "The Recall—Its Provisions and Significance," same magazine, vol. xl, p. 216 (Sept., 1912). The Illinois law was passed March 10, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Constitution, art. iv, § 193.

<sup>3</sup> Constitution, art. xxiii.

<sup>4</sup> S. G. Lowrie, *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. v, p. 248 (May, 1911).



## THE RECALL

Upon their completion recall petitions go for verification to the city clerk, county clerk, or secretary of state for examination and verification. Usually the officer whose recall is sought may resign within five days from the filing of his petition. If he does not, and if the petitions are found sufficient, a special election must be ordered to take place within from twenty to ninety days. In Arizona, for example, the period is twenty to thirty days; in Colorado, thirty to sixty days, if a general election is not to occur within ninety days; in Louisiana, three to five months. Some states provide that if a regular election is to occur at a not too distant date, say within ninety days, the recall election may be postponed for that length of time.

Resignations to avoid recall

Candidates who wish to run against the incumbent are thereupon nominated by petition or in such other manner as the primary laws may provide. Of course those who are backing the recall have a strong motive to center their strength upon a single opposition candidate if this can be done. Originally most recall elections consisted simply of a choice between the incumbent and those nominated against him, the candidate who received the largest vote holding the office to the end of the term. This has been modified until at present in nearly all cases the ballots used in recall elections present first the question, "Shall (name of person against whom the recall petition is filed) be recalled from the office of (title of office)?" with spaces for a cross mark or stamp opposite the answers "Yes" and "No." Underneath this question names of candidates are printed with the usual spaces for voting. In some cases also the top of the recall ballot is occupied by a printed statement giving the reasons for the recall as advanced by those who circulated the petitions, followed by a justification from the official under attack, each not to exceed 200 or 300 words in length.<sup>1</sup>

Recall ballots

Under the more modern arrangement answers to the first question are first counted. If a majority of answers

Counting of ballots

<sup>1</sup> For forms of petitions and ballots used in Oregon see J. D. Barnett *op. cit.*, appendix.

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If you ARE in favor of the recall of

WILLIAM C. HENDEREE

mark an X in the square opposite the word "Yes." If you are NOT in favor of his recall, mark an X in the square opposite the word "No."

YES. ☒

NO. ☐

If you ARE in favor of the recall of

OLIVER BRIGHT

mark an X in the square opposite the word "Yes." If you are NOT in favor of his recall, mark an X in the square opposite the word "No."

YES. ☒

NO. ☐

Nominees for successors of

WILLIAM C. HENDEREE

Vote for one only.

Mark an X in the square opposite the name of the candidate for whom you desire to vote:

☐ FRANK E. SMITH

☒ W. COURTRIGHT SMITH

☐ E. TENNEY

☐

Nominees for successors of

OLIVER BRIGHT

Vote for one only.

Mark an X in the square opposite the name of the candidate for whom you desire to vote:

☒ RALPH L. CARL

☐

Nominees for successors of

FRANK E. SMITH, Resigned

Vote for one only.

Mark an X in the square opposite the name of the candidate for whom you desire to vote:

☐ WILLIAM E. PINKER

☒ ALFRED TAYLOR

☐ FRANK B. WHISLEY

☐

BALLOT USED IN RECALL ELECTION, WILDWOOD, N. J., JULY 12, 1921, MARKED TO MAKE THE RECALL EFFECTIVE. IN THIS CASE ONE OF THE THREE COMMISSIONERS ESCAPED RECALL BY RESIGNATION, SUBSEQUENTLY RUNNING ON THE RECALL BALLOT FOR RE-ELECTION.

## THE RECALL

are recorded in the negative the recall has failed and the incumbent remains in office. If a majority vote "yes" on the question of recall, the votes of candidates are next counted and the candidate who has received the largest number of votes is entitled to hold the office to the end of the term. Usually the law provides that only those ballots may be counted on candidates which are also marked in answer to the recall question.

Two methods prevail regarding the number of times the name of the incumbent may appear on the recall ballot. Assuming that he does not resign within the time allowed for this purpose, his name goes on the ballot automatically at least so far as the question of recall is considered. In some states it does not appear again as a candidate against the field. Under this arrangement, of course, the official whose recall is sought must get a majority of all voting on the first question to retain his position. If he fails to do so his successor may win by a bare plurality. In other states the incumbent's name appears first in the question referred to above, and again in the list of candidates. Under this arrangement it is possible for the recall to defeat itself—that is, for the question as to the recall to be answered affirmatively by a majority, while, nevertheless, the incumbent retains his seat by winning over the other candidates with a bare plurality.

Name of  
incumbent  
on recall  
ballot

It was a valid criticism against the original form of recall elections in which the incumbent simply stood for reelection against candidates pitted against him, that the result did not register the decision of the people solely upon the conduct of the official whose recall was sought. Manifestly it would turn in part upon his popularity as compared with that of his rivals. Nor is this criticism wholly disposed of by the rather artless device of asking the electorate to answer first the question as to recall, and immediately thereafter to choose a successor among various candidates.

Effect of  
new form of  
recall ballot

If, on the other hand, it were the practice to vote first on the question of the recall only, leaving the vacancy

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

### The Kansas form of the recall

created in case the recall succeeded to be filled either by appointment or in the same way as any vacancy caused by death or resignation, this criticism would be avoided. At times, of course, the latter method would involve the added trouble and expense of a second special election, which is no doubt one of the reasons it has not been generally adopted. So far Kansas alone has taken the latter horn of the dilemma, its constitution providing simply that if the popular vote is in favor of recall "a vacancy in the office shall exist to be filled as authorized by law." It should be remembered in this connection that Kansas makes the recall applicable to appointive as well as to elective officials.

### Second recall elections

In Louisiana and North Dakota the recall may not be resorted to a second time against the same official during the same term. Colorado pays the election expenses of an official against whom the recall is invoked unsuccessfully and makes the practically impossible requirement of a 50-per-cent petition for a second recall election against him during the same term. California also repays election expenses of state officials against whom the recall has failed, and provides that a second recall shall not be undertaken within six months. In other states it is usually provided that those who wish to launch a second recall against the same man during the same term must first pay into the public treasury the costs of the first recall election.

### Other methods of removal

Kansas is the only state which expressly provides that the existence of the recall shall not exclude the use of other means of securing the removal from office of unsatisfactory officials.<sup>1</sup> In all other cases, apparently, this is assumed. Prior to the introduction of the recall, American states and municipalities had provided a large number of methods to secure the dismissal of officials. These methods included, to mention a few types only, impeachment; dismissal of appointive officers by their executive superiors either acting alone or with the consent of the upper legislative house; removal of judges by joint resolution of

<sup>1</sup> Constitution, art. iv, sec. 192.

## THE RECALL

both branches of the legislature; and removal by higher court judges of prosecuting attorneys, minor judicial officials, and minor county and town officers.

Opponents of the recall have always urged that these methods were sufficiently numerous, that they were more deliberate and impartial than removal by popular vote, and that they met the needs of the situation fully, or at least might be made to do so by certain modifications of procedure. Advocates of the recall, on the other hand, held that these earlier methods were too cumbersome, that they offered too much scope for the use of political influence and the introduction of legal technicalities, that in spite of them, many officials were subservient to bosses and machines and unmindful of the loyalty they owed to the interests of the people.

Arguments  
based on  
these other  
methods

Acute political observers have often noted the unsatisfactory nature of the reasons publicly advanced for the recall of officials. These do not have to be misdemeanors or legal offenses sufficient to justify dismissal by other methods. Corrupt or illegal conduct, misrepresentation of constituents, incompetence or any other grounds that may seem sufficient, may be alleged as reasons for recall. As a matter of fact, the reasons stated may amount to nothing more than alleged errors of judgment—spending too much money for one purpose rather than another, in one section of a state or county rather than another, or upholding appointive officials whose conduct or opinion has given offense. There is a general tendency to state reasons rather broadly, or to state part of the reasons only, leaving the real motives of the recall movement undisclosed. Fear of possible libel suits accounts partly for this reticence. Sometimes the real motives are not very creditable, involving, as they may, many petty, personal, local and property interests. For example, wet and dry animosities seem to be invoked freely in such campaigns, if not in petitions. These conditions frequently give a rather sordid air to recall movements. It must be remembered, however, that the lower motives play a very influential,

Reasons  
advanced  
for recall of  
officials



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

although somewhat concealed, part in all elections. Recall elections differ from other elections only in the necessity of formulating reasons, which tends to bring these lower motives to the surface. Of course they are unpleasant to contemplate, but, after all, it is more sanitary to bring them out to some degree into the sunlight and air of publicity than to ignore their existence.

Cautionary  
effects of  
I. and R.  
and recall

Advocates of the initiative, referendum, and recall frequently urged the adoption of all three of these tools of direct popular power not because they were needed for frequent use, but because of their cautionary effect upon public officials. In homely phrase they were to resemble the farmer's shotgun behind the door, to be taken out only in case of emergency. Contrary to this expectation, as we have seen, the initiative and referendum developed a frequency of use that constitutes one of the chief of current objections to these institutions. The recall alone has been used so sparingly as to justify the earlier prediction of its friends.

Cases of  
resort to the  
recall

Oregon, which has had the longest state-wide experience with the recall, witnessed only seventeen instances of its use in seven years following its introduction. Thirty-five office holders were involved, only nine of whom succeeded in retaining their offices. No incumbents of state offices were attacked in Oregon. Until 1921 the most prominent officials against whom the recall was invoked in other states were the mayor of Los Angeles in 1909, and the mayor of Seattle in 1911.<sup>1</sup> In both cases the incumbents were removed. There has been but one instance

<sup>1</sup> On the Los Angeles recall of 1909, see F. T. Stillson, *National Conference on City Government*, 1909, pp. 326-333; *Independent*, vol. lxvi, pp. 432, 861 (Feb. 25, March 26, 1909). The Seattle recall of 1911 is discussed fully by F. W. Catlett, "The Working of the Recall in Seattle," *Ann. Am. Acad. Pol. Sci.*, vol. xliii, pp. 227-236 (Sept., 1912). Cf. also *McClures*, vol. xxxvii, pp. 647-663 (Oct., 1911); *Outlook*, vol. xxxvii, p. 295 (Feb., 1911). In both cases moral issues played a large part. The first Seattle recall was followed by an effort to recall the new incumbent which failed for want of signatures. In 1915, however, the mayor who was recalled in 1913 was again elected mayor of that city on a platform pledging reform. See W. M. Baine, "Seattle Changed Its Mind about H. Gill," *Am. Mag.*, vol. lxxx, p. 51 (Sept., 1915). This incident has

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of the use of the recall against officials elected by vote of the state as a whole. In 1920 North Dakota adopted the recall largely through the influence of the Nonpartisan League. A year later it was employed with success to remove from office the governor of the state who had been elected, also with Nonpartisan League support, at the same time the recall was introduced. The figures in this case are particularly interesting because of the slight margins in the two votes. In 1920, Lynn J. Frazier was elected governor with Republican and Nonpartisan League support by a vote of 117,188 to 112,488 for his opponent, J. F. T. O'Connor, who had Democratic and Independent support. In the recall election a year later Frazier was beaten by a vote of 107,333 to 114,432 for his opponent, R. A. Nestos. At the same election the state commissioner of agriculture and attorney general were recalled. Nevertheless little animus seems to have survived against Frazier for he was elected to the United States Senate in 1922.

In general, therefore, the recall has shown itself to be an instrument serviceable primarily against local officials whose acts touch constituents closely, and hence often rouse their resentment. Considering the very large number of such officials throughout the country now subject to recall, its use must be described as sporadic only. Under the circumstances critics doubt whether its cautionary effect upon officials is much greater than the moral and religious effect upon individuals due to the knowledge of the latter that they may be struck by lightning. There is one possibility in this connection which is wholly evil. Enemies of a given office holder may circulate recall petitions against him until they have secured signatures to a number slightly less than the required quota. Then as the phrase has it they may hold the petition "in cold storage," threatening him with its completion unless he conforms to their wishes. This practice, which is alleged to have occurred

Recall primarily for local use

been used as evidence of popular instability alleged to be caused by the recall, but it seems to prove nothing on that score which might not be alleged against ordinary popular elections.

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in certain instances, might be broken up by fixing a definite period of time within which the required number of signatures would have to be obtained, failing which petitions would be void.

Popular interest in recall elections

On the rare occasions when they do occur, recall elections usually attract an intense popular interest. The issues presented touch citizens closely and often they are quite sensational in character. An element of sharp personal antagonism, somewhat similar to that of the duel, is present. The ballots used are short enough to satisfy the most thoroughgoing short-ballot advocates. At times recall elections develop a good deal of noise and some violence may occur or be threatened, but unwelcome incidents of this kind are no more directly attributable to the recall than to ordinary elections, which are also occasionally marred by them. In a few Oregon recall elections the vote cast was actually in excess of the registered vote. However, extreme interest is not always manifested. In the same state there have been other recall elections characterized by general apathy and in which less than a third of the registered vote was polled.

Effectiveness of the recall

Careful observers find it difficult to appraise the effectiveness of the recall. Experience is not sufficiently extensive even in those states and cities which have had it longest for final judgment. It is not difficult to imagine circumstances under which the recall might be galvanized into a much more frequent use than has hitherto been recorded. Probably it has prevented some of the more conspicuous political sins of commission, such as bad franchise grants and the establishment of segregated vice districts. Probably also it has fostered some political sins of omission. Tax officials subject to recall are said to be afraid to make assessments at full value as required by law. Theoretically, the recall may be used as readily by the machine against faithful servants of the people as by the people against servants of the machine, but experience shows that the first contingency is little to be feared.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Kales, *Unpopular Government in the United States*, pp. 122-127.

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Critics of the recall were wont to argue that it would make voters careless. Since they could get rid of an official at any time, they would be inclined to elect officials without careful consideration of their fitness. This argument overlooked the very considerable amount of effort and even of expense necessary to conduct successfully a recall movement. And there is no evidence to show that voters are more indifferent to the character of candidates with the recall than they were before its introduction. Another argument was that if the menace of the recall were added to other disadvantages attached to many elective positions—such as low salaries, hard work, constant criticism, and short terms—there would be a dearth of candidates. Nevertheless, candidates, good, bad, and indifferent, present themselves quite as freely after the recall has been adopted as before. And although the recall has not made state-wide advances in recent years so rapidly as during the period 1911-14, in general those states and cities which have already adopted it seem well enough satisfied. At least movements for its abolition are seldom heard of, although there is some discussion of methods by which it may be perfected.

Criticisms  
of the re-  
call

Perhaps the greatest single gain which may be credited to the recall is that indirectly it has aided materially in bringing about a much-needed lengthening of the terms of certain elective officers. As a matter of fact, the recall is of little use as against short-term office holders. For example, if petitions must be halted for the first six months of a two-year term, and if elections may take place not earlier than sixty to ninety days after petitions have been completed and approved, it is evident that the time during which such an office holder may be attacked is limited. Moreover, the loss inflicted upon a short-term office holder by a successful recall, and consequently the cautionary effect of the institution, are likely to be much less than in the case of a long-term office holder. To be sure, these are negative results, but on the positive side the same considerations incline the electorate to look with more favor

Recall has  
led to longer  
terms for  
certain of-  
fice holders

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

upon an increase of official tenure and powers, provided the incumbents are at the same time made subject to the recall. So far as legislative officials are concerned, the initiative and referendum tend to have the same effect, although not to so great a degree as the recall. In all probability the short ballot, and the commission and commission-manager forms of municipal government, all of which involve longer terms and greater concentration of powers, would have made much less rapid progress throughout the country had it not been possible to offer the electorate at the same time the sop of the recall. Great readjustments of a similar character are impending in state administration, and these may also find the recall a useful adjunct.

Recall of  
judicial of-  
ficials

Even more than the initiative and referendum, the recall was denounced originally as unconstitutional and revolutionary in that it substituted a dangerous form of direct democratic rule for representative republican institutions. But the bitterest condemnation was reserved for those who proposed to make it applicable to judicial officials.<sup>1</sup> As typical of the more extreme of these expressions one eminent writer who conceded that the introduction of the referendum as a check upon the legislature might be considered progress nevertheless insisted that "if it is progress it is also revolution." The initiative he held to be "the most preposterous and the most vicious" of all the proposals brought forward in the name of direct democracy. Further, in his opinion, the recall of executive and legislative officials, while meddlesome and disturbing to statesmanship, was not a violation of the principles of representative government as are the initiative and referendum. Applied to the judiciary, however, the recall "is much more than a piece of stupid folly. It is an outrage of the

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Hall, *Popular Government*, pp. 203-241; S. W. McCall, "Representative as against Direct Government," *Atlantic*, vol. cviii, pp. 454-466 (Oct., 1911); H. J. Ford, "Direct Legislation and the Recall," *Ann. Am. Acad. Pol. Sci.*, vol. xliii, p. 75 (Sept., 1912). Also articles by R. G. Brown, J. A. Metcalf, and A. H. Snow in the same issue of the *Annals*.



## THE RECALL

first magnitude.”<sup>1</sup> Criticism directed specifically against the latter point was not without its effect since, as we have already noted, four of the eleven recall states expressly exempt judicial officials of all grades from recall. The action of Arizona on this point attracted much attention in 1911 and 1912. The first constitution with which it sought admission to the union provided for the recall without excluding judges. Congress passed an enabling Act stipulating, however, that an amendment be submitted to the people of the state at the first ensuing election by which judicial officers should be exempted. Even with this condition President Taft vetoed the enabling Act in a message which presented fully and forcibly the arguments against the recall of judges.<sup>2</sup> Thereupon Congress amended the enabling Act by inserting the words “except members of the judiciary,” as applied to the proposed recall provisions in the state constitution. A year following its admission, however, Arizona restored the judicial recall to its constitution.<sup>3</sup>

Opponents of the recall of judges laid great stress on the necessity of leaving the courts free from every gust of popular passion in their work of interpreting constitutions and laws. With a sword of Damocles forever suspended over their heads in the form of the recall, judges would lose their independence and constitutional guaranties would be swept away. Advocates of this use of the recall argued that judges sometimes fall under the sinister influence of political bosses and machines, or of great corporations, and that they, as well as other officials, needed to be reminded occasionally that they were servants of the people. As elective officials in most of the states they must submit their claims to the people from time to time in any event. The recall proposed merely to hold them to ac-

Arguments  
on recall  
of judges

<sup>1</sup> N. M. Butler, *Why Should We Change Our Form of Government?*, pp. 25, 32.

<sup>2</sup> The message may be found in House Doc. 106, 62d Cong., 1st Sess.; also reprinted in Beard and Schultz, *Documents on the State-Wide Initiative, Referendum and Recall*, pp. 246-256.

<sup>3</sup> *Am. Yr. Bk.*, 1911, p. 262; 1912, p. 47.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

count in cases and at times when gross abuses were alleged against them.

Use of recall against judges highly exceptional

In the light of our experience to date the controversy seems rather barren. "No judge has yet been recalled because of popular dissatisfaction with a decision involving constitutional interpretation. . . . The recall has not yet been invoked against a member of any superior or supreme court."<sup>1</sup> The most sensational case on record involving a judge was directed and carried to a successful conclusion against a San Francisco police magistrate in 1913. In this case the accusation was that of collusion in the escape of prisoners charged with serious crimes against young girls.<sup>2</sup> Two other San Francisco police judges were recalled in 1921, an interesting feature of the case being the fact that the Bar Association aided in circulating petitions against them.<sup>3</sup> During the first seven years of the state-wide recall in Oregon, it was invoked on two or three occasions against local judges, but they were attacked because of the alleged misperformance of certain duties imposed upon them in an administrative capacity, not because of their conduct on the bench. In general the conclusion seems well founded that the people not only have a high respect for the courts, but are little interested in purely legal decisions, and therefore are not likely to resort to the use of the recall against judges on such grounds.<sup>4</sup>

Recall of judicial decisions

An offshoot of the controversy over the recall of judges which provoked an enormous amount of superheated discussion during the campaign of 1912, was the proposed recall of judicial decisions. In the platform of the Progressive party of that year, the plank on this subject was as follows: "When an Act passed under the police power

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Holcombe, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

<sup>2</sup> For details see the *Independent*, vol. lxxiv, p. 1014 (May 8, 1913); *Literary Digest*, vol. xlvi, p. 1048 (May 10, 1913).

<sup>3</sup> P. Eliel, "Corrupt Judges Recalled in San Francisco," *Nat. Mun. Rev.* vol. x, p. 316 (June, 1921).

<sup>4</sup> J. D. Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

## THE RECALL

of the state is held unconstitutional under the state constitution by the courts, the people, after an ample interval for deliberation, shall have an opportunity to vote on the question whether they desire the Act to become a law, notwithstanding such decision."<sup>1</sup>

Colorado adopted this proposal in the form of a constitutional amendment in 1913, but no other state has followed its example.<sup>2</sup> According to this amendment no court lower than the supreme court may declare laws unconstitutional. If the supreme court takes this action regarding an Act passed by the legislature, its decision is not binding for a period of sixty days. During this period petitions may be circulated demanding a referendum vote on the law. If these petitions are signed by 5 per cent of the voters an election must be held within ninety days, and if a majority vote favors the law it is upheld regardless of the decision of the supreme court. The same provisions hold with regard to judicial decisions adverse to city charters except that in such cases petitions are circulated and the election is held only in the city affected thereby. From 1913 to 1921 no action was taken under this amendment, and in the latter year it was declared unconstitutional by the state supreme court.<sup>3</sup>

Adopted by  
Colorado

At this distance of time it is difficult to see anything revolutionary or dangerous in the recall of judicial decisions as proposed in 1912. It had the advantage of being much less invidious than the recall of judges themselves, which was doubtless one of the reasons it was taken up.

Futile  
rather than  
radical

<sup>1</sup> For details see P. O. Ray, *op. cit.*, pp. 499-503. A favorable view of the recall of judicial decisions is presented by W. L. Ransom, "Majority Rule and the Judiciary," 1912; and by W. D. Lewis, "A New Method of Constitutional Amendment by Popular Vote," *Ann. Am. Acad. Pol. Sci.*, vol. xliii, pp. 311-325 (Sept., 1912). The proposal is criticized in detail by W. F. Dodd, "Social Legislation and the Courts," *Pol. Sci. Quar.*, vol. xxviii, pp. 1-17 (March, 1913); and A. B. Hall, *Popular Government*, pp. 174-202. The political effect of the proposal is discussed by W. D. Lewis, *Life of Roosevelt*, pp. 340-344.

<sup>2</sup> See L. 1913, p. 678.

<sup>3</sup> R. L. Cushman, *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.*, vol. xv, pp. 413-415 (Aug., 1921).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

On the other hand, it amounted simply "to a new method of constitutional amendment by popular vote," and, as such, was narrower and less effective than the constitutional initiative. In short, the proposal was futile rather than radical, and has ceased altogether to figure practically in politics

### BOOK NOTES

By far the greater part of the literature of the recall is to be found in books and articles dealing also with the initiative and referendum. J. D. Barnett, *The Operation of the Initiative, Referendum and Recall in Oregon* (1915), contains the most definite and impartial treatment of the subject. Former-president Taft's veto message, cited in the text (page 503), is perhaps the most cogent argument against the recall of judges. The general works cited under Book Notes to the preceding chapter, especially those by Oberholtzer, Munro, Taft, Lowell, and Hall, may be consulted with profit on the recall.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE SPOILS SYSTEM AND CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

EXCEPTING only its application to the initiative and referendum, all the manifold forms of the voting process discussed in preceding chapters are employed in the choice of elective public officials. The fundamental importance of this process under any form of representative government fully justifies the large share of popular attention given to it. It is presumably through the officers thus chosen that the will of the people is expressed in all the more important affairs of government. What is not so clearly visioned in the public mind is the fact that elective officials form an extremely small proportion of the great army of public officials taken as a whole, all of whom are engaged in some major or minor part of the work of government.

Relatively  
few elec-  
tive officials

In the federal system, for example, there are only 533 elective public officials—the President, the Vice-President, 96 Senators, and 435 Representatives. From a body of less than three hundred officials at its organization the national government has expanded until in 1922 it had 560,863 appointive civilian employees of the executive civil service,<sup>1</sup> making it the largest employer of labor in the world. In state governments also the appointive is largely in excess of the elective personnel. New York

Large num-  
ber of ap-  
pointive of-  
ficials

<sup>1</sup> In 1919, at the peak of the demand caused by the war, the number was 917,760. These figures do not include the comparatively small number of places within the appointive power of the legislative and judicial branches, nor, of course, the armed forces of the army and navy. Cf. *Thirty-ninth Annual Report of the United States Civil Service Commission for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1922*, p. vii.



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state has nearly 18,000,<sup>1</sup> Illinois something like 10,000 employees. Metropolitan cities have even larger labor forces than the greater state governments. New York city now has about 75,000 employees, Chicago something like 30,000. In rural counties and local governments the disparity between the numbers of elective and appointive offices is not so great, but as a rule the latter are much more numerous. According to a recent estimate "in the entire public service of the federal government and all the states, counties, towns, cities, and villages there are nearly three million persons. One in every thirty-five persons—man, woman and child—draws pay from the government. And we pay them in a year, all told, something more than three billion dollars. Every head of a family puts his hand into his pocket each year and takes out on the average more than one hundred dollars to contribute to the pay of his public servants."<sup>2</sup>

Voting  
strength of  
office  
holders

Apparently the foregoing estimate includes both elective and appointive officials. The latter, as we have just noted, are in a very great majority, and since most of them are adults they constitute a considerable proportion of the voting population, perhaps one in twenty or twenty-five. In large cities this proportion runs much higher. Professor Munro estimates that in New York city the number of municipal employees is nearly 8 per cent of the registered voting population. In Boston it is about 12 per cent. Considering the political activity of municipal employees and the further fact that most of them can influence the votes of relatives and friends, he reaches the conclusion that their actual political strength is equivalent to from one-sixth to one-eighth of the electorate—sufficient to constitute the balance of power in most of the large

<sup>1</sup> Not including laborers, nor some 5,000 positions in county and village service subject to the state civil service law. See *Thirty-ninth Annual Report of the State Civil Service Commission*, 1921, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the admirable pamphlet by E. C. Marsh, *The Civil Service: A Sketch of the Merit System*, published by the National Civil Service Reform League, New York, 1922, p. 4.

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cities.<sup>1</sup> Outside the metropolitan centers of population the mere voting strength of public employees is not great enough to make them an important political factor. Moreover, taking the country as a whole, it is in all probability fairly evenly divided between the parties. On the other hand, the possibility of the misuse of so large a number of places to build up a political machine is so omnipresent and threatening that it constitutes one of the major problems of American politics.

Even during the administrations of Washington and Adams partisan considerations were by no means disregarded in making federal appointments. With the defeat of the Federalist party the demand for patronage was materially increased. Finding himself faced by the quandary, "How are vacancies to be obtained?" Jefferson remarked, somewhat plaintively, "Those by death are few, by resignation none." At that time public opinion would have been outraged by the use of the presidential power of removal on any considerable scale in order to secure offices for distribution. The old English view that once in private hands a public office takes on something of the nature of a vested property right, still survived. Meanwhile, however, this traditional barrier was breaking down in the larger cities and states of the North. With the disappearance of property qualifications for suffrage there was added to the electorate in this part of the country a large number of new voters who had no sympathy with the political ideas of the dominant local gentry. "A race of politicians grew up who were not the men to entertain scruples about disturbing gentlemen in their snug berths. The longer the office holders had been in the more reason why they should get out so as to make room for others and give every one a chance at the public crib."<sup>2</sup> Using Tammany Hall to organize the new mass of poorer voters, Aaron Burr succeeded in wresting the control of New York city from Hamilton in 1800. Thus inaugurated, the

Origin of  
spoils sys-  
tem

<sup>1</sup> *Government of American Cities*, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> H. J. Ford, *The Rise and Growth of American Politics*, p. 148.

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use of patronage as a political weapon spread apace through other Northern cities and states. It was another New York state leader, Senator Marcy, who some years later evolved the phrase destined to become the catchword of the new political conception: "To the victor belong the spoils of the enemy."<sup>1</sup>

Four-years  
Tenure Act  
1820

In 1820 the first breach was made in the federal bulwark by the passage of an Act limiting to four years the tenure of district attorneys, collectors, surveyors of customs, navy agents, paymasters, and some other officials. Primarily the purpose of this Act was to enable Secretary Crawford to build up a machine that would help him to reach the Presidency. By automatically ejecting place holders at the end of four years the Act of 1820 was, of course, much more productive of vacancies than the tardy processes of death and resignation. Then came the popular upheaval which made Andrew Jackson President. Although generally held responsible for the introduction of the spoils system into the federal government, Jackson made no clean sweep. According to Benton, he left a majority of offices in the hands of members of the opposing party even in the executive departments at Washington. However, the number of removals made by Jackson during the first year of his administration, variously estimated at from 690 to 734, was so large and startling as compared with the record of his predecessors that it may be taken as the mark of a new era in politics.

Jackson's  
administra-  
tion and  
later

In 1836, the last year of Jackson's second term, another law was placed upon the statute books which materially facilitated the operation of the spoils system. It provided that all postmasters whose compensation was one thousand dollars a year or more should be appointed by the President with the confirmation of the Senate and that their term of office should be four years. Further, they were made removable at the discretion of the President. Following Jackson's administration the spoils system made

<sup>1</sup> Used in a debate in the United States Senate, 1832; *Register of Debates in Congress*, viii, pt. 1, 1325.

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rapid progress not only in the federal government, but also in state and city governments except in the South, where for a long time its introduction locally was successfully resisted. After each defeat at the polls deserving members of the victorious party raised the cry, "Turn the rascals out," and clean sweeps became the order of the day. From 1857 on, even when one party remained in power continuously for a long period, each factional defeat was followed by wholesale dismissals. And individual leaders in Congress and out constantly brought pressure to bear upon heads of departments to dismiss employees in order that their own followers might be rewarded. At its extreme development the spoils system was capable of producing results similar to those summed up in the first annual report of the Civil Service Commission, 1884, as follows:

When Draper, a Republican, was collector of the port at New York, he removed a subordinate as often as every third day for a whole year. When Smyth, another Republican, succeeded Draper as collector in 1866, he removed 830 of his 903 Republican subordinates at the average rate of three every four days. When Grinnell, another Republican, succeeded Smyth as collector in 1869, he removed 510 out of his 892 Republican subordinates in sixteen months. When Murphy, another Republican, succeeded Grinnell as collector in 1870, he removed Republicans at the rate of three every five days until 338 had been cast out. . . . Thus, during a period of five years in succession, collectors, all belonging to one party, for the purpose of patronage, made removals at a single office of members of their own party more frequently than at the rate of one every day. In 1,565 secular days 1,678 such removals were made.<sup>1</sup>

Of course such "rapid-fire" results were exceptional. The principle of rotation in office was seldom applied universally either in the federal or in state and local government. A new party taking power was virtually forced to retain certain experienced or especially capable employees in technical positions. Nor were all other ap-

Exceptions  
to principle  
of rotation

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Marsh, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

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pointees without training, for some men succeeded in obtaining a long intermittent term of office, coming in and going out repeatedly with the ups and downs of their party or faction. At times of stress when it became advisable to "pander a little to the moral element in the community," a few conspicuously good appointments might be made. In Pennsylvania this process is known as "sprinkling political perfumery." Professor Merriam relates a story of the head of a great spoils system who once decided to make a "feature" of the school trustees. "He was found late one night in his favorite saloon, and was asked to make one of the customary types of appointments; but to the surprise of the solicitor he answered: 'We ain't appointing no stiffs here. Give us a guy of some class.'"<sup>1</sup>

In favor of the principle of rotation in office *per se* some respectable authorities and precedents may be quoted. Jefferson thought that it would prevent the creation of a bureaucracy. Jackson himself was convinced that long tenure of office leads to laxness and corruption. Provisions are included in many state constitutions and city charters making certain prominent office holders ineligible to succeed themselves. In the case of financial posts limitations of this kind are held to be particularly valuable because they compel the settlement of accounts at regular intervals. There is little in common, however, between changes of the above sort and the indiscriminate rotation of innumerable offices, most of them petty in character, which lies at the basis of the spoils system. Nevertheless, rotation in its extreme form has not lacked apologists, most of them, to be sure, spoils politicians themselves. Few of these apologists go the length of Plunkitt, who held that while the civil-service law lasts "there can't be no real patriotism."<sup>2</sup> All of them assert that without patronage parties cannot exist. Since parties are generally conceded to be necessary and beneficent, every advantage

Defense of  
spoils sys-  
tem

<sup>1</sup> *The American Party System*, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> W. L. Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*, p. 19.



## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

that can be claimed for them is put to the credit of the spoils system by this argument. Unfortunately for it, however, our party life is most intelligent, vigorous, and successful in the field of national government where civil-service reform has made the largest inroads into the volume of patronage. In spite of powerful local machines, undoubtedly built up in large part by spoils, party life is distinctly less intelligent and efficient, even less honest, in state, city, and county governments where the most abundant supply of spoils, relatively speaking, is to be found. Parties functioned efficiently in the United States during the pre-Jacksonian era, when spoils were virtually unknown. The experience of many European countries, notably of England since the reform of her civil service, shows that a vigorous party life is possible without the use of patronage.

One of the earliest arguments in favor of the spoils system was that it fostered an ambition to serve the country on the part of a great many poorer citizens, formerly excluded by a caste of stiff and arrogant aristocrats. Hence it was essentially democratic and in accordance with the natural equality of men. If you do not believe that "one man is as good as another," at least you may accept the dictum of George III, himself an adept in the use of spoils, "that every man is good enough for any place he can get."<sup>1</sup> At the time the anti-aristocratic argument was advanced in favor of rotation it did not lack a certain justification. Applied as it often is to-day in favor of turning out a trained and selected force for the benefit of incompetents, it takes on quite a different color. Descending from argument to epithet, spoilsmen glorified their practice as "the American system," deriding "snivel service reform" as "the Chinese system." A favorite assertion, according to Roosevelt, "was to call the reform Chinese, because the Chinese had constructed an inefficient governmental system based in part on the theory of written competitive examinations. . . . The argument might

Rotation  
alleged to be  
democratic

<sup>1</sup> P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics*, p. 373.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

have been applied still further. For instance, the Chinese had used gunpowder for centuries; gunpowder is used in Springfield rifles; therefore Springfield rifles were Chinese. One argument is quite as logical as the other."<sup>1</sup>

Arguments  
against the  
spoils system

Arguments against the spoils system are based upon its effects in the fields (1) of party organization and method, (2) of administration and legislation, and (3) of political life and morals in general. So far as the misuse of patronage is responsible for the machine—and notoriously it is one of the foundation stones of such structures—the numerous malpractices characteristic of machine rule may be charged to spoils. The methods and consequences of machine domination have been discussed at length in an earlier chapter, and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the anti-aristocratic arguments and democratic pretenses of spoils politicians cannot be reconciled with the actual practice of a highly centralized party organization. The latter is essentially a narrow oligarchy, if indeed it does not become a virtual autocracy under boss rule. It does not open wide the avenues to public employment on a democratic basis; on the contrary, it places the power of appointment in the hands of one or a few men who in most cases are not responsible to any governmental authority for their exercise of that power. Also machine rule greatly restricts the number of those eligible in fact to appointive office. Notoriously, the principle of selection which it employs is not that of fitness for the duties to be performed, but that of service to the machine, sometimes service of a demoralizing or even criminal character. With occasional exceptions citizens who are unwilling to perform such partisan service are as effectually excluded from office as they would be under any other kind of oligarchy.

Effects on  
legislation  
and admin-  
istration

In the fields of legislation and administration the consequences of the spoils system are numerous and sinister. Thanks to the comparatively small amount of patronage at its disposal, the judiciary fortunately escapes most of

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 151.

## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

these consequences. Under the spoils system members of Congress, state legislatures, and city councils must spend a large part of their time besieging executive officers and administrative departments in a constant search for the jobs demanded by their constituents. As a result the legislative work intrusted to them must suffer, while at the same time administrative officers are worried and distracted almost beyond human endurance. A governor or legislator who attempts to perform the proper functions of his office, neglecting demands made upon him for patronage, soon finds his position made untenable by "deserving Democrats" or "deserving Republicans" back home, as the case may be. Of one such governor a party manager, quoted by Professor Merriam, remarked: "I simply do not understand Governor ——. He seems to take no interest in these appointments. He spends all of his time thinking about bills in the legislature, or about his speeches. He does not seem to care a damn about politics."<sup>1</sup>

Until a President, governor or other executive officer has disposed of the patronage under his control he may, of course, use it to induce legislators to do his bidding. It was in this fashion that Lincoln procured the passage by Congress of certain needed war measures and that Cleveland obtained the support of silver Congressmen in 1893 for the repeal of the silver-purchase clause of the Sherman Act. While executive patronage has been employed at times for praiseworthy ends, it may be turned to the upbuilding of a personal machine, to secure action from a legislature contrary to the will of the electors, or to other sinister purposes. On the other hand, once the patronage has been disposed of, disgruntled legislators and others who feel that they have been defrauded of their fair share, do not hesitate to turn against the executive and his policies. It is for this reason in large part that a governor or mayor is so much more influential at the beginning than at the end of his term.

Ends for  
which ex-  
ecutive pat-  
ronage is  
used

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 104.

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Sinecures  
and padded  
payrolls

When the supply of patronage is not sufficient—and it never is—the legislative body is under strong temptation to create useless jobs. Pressure is also brought to bear upon administrative departments to pad their payrolls. From the spoils seeker's point of view such sinecures are eminently desirable, not only because they entail few if any public duties, but also because they leave him free for the performance of the partisan tasks imposed upon him by the machine. If free play is given to the pressure for jobs regardless of the need for them, supernumeraries swarm in the public service. A striking instance of this sort occurred in the Bureau of Printing and Engraving at Washington in 1877. Having been exempted even from the weak rules in effect at the time it became a dumping ground for the favorites of members of Congress. An official report made to the Secretary of the Treasury stated that over 500 employees, or 56 per cent of those in the Bureau, were unnecessary. Some of these supernumeraries were so much in the way of the regular workers that shelves had to be provided on which they spent part of their time in sleep. The unnecessary cost involved amounted to a total of \$390,000 a year.

Discipline  
vs. pull

Under the spoils system, incompetents as well as supernumeraries multiply in the public service. The few men of ability who receive appointments soon grow disgusted with their slipshod environment and turn to private employment. On the other hand, inefficient employees are extremely hard to dislodge, for the same political influence which procured them their places is ready at all times to protect them if possible. Constant intervention by legislators and political leaders in disciplinary and other matters breaks down the morale of the administrative departments. Men who attempt to serve two masters soon learn which of the two must be obeyed. Under the spoils system it is not the official master, but the political master, who has the means to enforce obedience. A newly appointed bureau chief may have the most praiseworthy determination to improve the work of his force, but he

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soon discovers that efforts to get rid of incompetents are likely to prove futile if the latter have a political "pull." If, nevertheless, he persists until he succeeds, a berth is soon found for the discharged "martyr" in some other bureau where standards are not so high.

It is in the field of political life and morals generally that the reactions of the spoils system are most deplorable. The increased cost of government due to inefficient public servants, the large number of supernumerary employees, and the heavy labor turnover, is, of course, reflected in heavier tax burdens. Even greater loss is inflicted upon the people by the poor quality of administrative service supplied them under the spoils system, as a result of which they suffer in convenience, business and health. Statistics quoted by E. C. Marsh, show that for the seven years preceding the classification under civil-service rules of the Railway Mail Service, employees handled an average of 1,230,731 pieces of mail annually with an average of 335 errors. For the twenty years following classification the average number of pieces handled annually rose to 1,504,164. The average number of errors fell from an average of 183 per employee for the first decade of this period to 131 for the second decade. Better conditions of work and better administrative methods contributed to the improvement, but the competitive examination system must be given its share of credit, particularly for the decrease of errors. The illustration is cited because of the large possibilities of delay and loss in business due to errors in handling mail matter.

Increased  
cost; poor  
service

In the broader view parties themselves are harmed by the injection of patronage. It may be admitted freely that the use of spoils contributed materially to the up-building of great party organizations in the United States. "Patronage does not really help a party. It helps the bosses to get control of the machinery of the party."<sup>1</sup> But this growth of organizations dominated by the spoils motive was not accomplished without some loss to party

Parties  
harmed by  
patronage

<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, p. 147.



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life on the side of principles and policies. Instead of being directed to the settlement of important issues political contests were lowered in tone and envenomed in spirit by ceaseless vindictive squabbles over jobs. Under these circumstances men of higher type turned in disgust from candidacy for elective offices. To seek appointive office on any other basis than service to the organization was, as we have already noted, futile in the great majority of cases. Large numbers of citizens who would have responded eagerly to campaigns involving real issues relapsed into apathy as a result of the ceaseless sordid struggles for patronage. Lowered standards in politics were reflected in contemporary morals. As early as 1835, Calhoun, with rare prescience, wrote of the spoils system, "Were a premium offered for the best means of extending to the utmost the power of patronage, to destroy the love of country, and to substitute a spirit of subserviency and man worship, to encourage vice and discourage virtue, no scheme more perfect could be devised."<sup>1</sup>

### Beginnings of civil service re- form

Evils of such magnitude led naturally to demands for reform. It is a curious fact that during the same period when the United States was sinking deeper and deeper into the spoils system, England, aroused by conditions in her administrative service both in India and at home, was gradually working out the means of extricating herself from ancient abuses of patronage. Reformers in the United States were thus enabled to draw largely upon English experience in the solution of our own problem. However, the struggle was to prove much longer and harder on this side of the Atlantic, nor are the results attained at present so complete and so generally accepted as in England. The first federal laws on the subject date from 1853 and 1855. They required noncompetitive or so-called "pass examinations" for some 14,000 minor clerical positions. Under the noncompetitive system the examination was administered at the discretion of the de-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. A. Wooburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems*, p. 258.

## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

partment head under whom the applicant was to be employed. It was assumed that in the interest of the department he would devise tests the passing of which would guarantee fitness to perform the duties involved. Unfortunately, however, the administrative official usually feared the influence of the Congressman or other politician who was backing the applicant. Consequently, the standards set in such examinations were often farcical. At the best they excluded only impossible dunces. According to Prof. A. B. Hart questions such as the following were actually asked: "Where would you go to draw your salary?" "How many are four times four?" "What have you had for breakfast?" "Who recommended your employment?"<sup>1</sup> Of course spoils politicians found little to complain of in the pass-examination system, and the weak laws of 1853 and 1855 gradually fell into disuse. In 1864 an Act was passed providing for the appointment of consular clerks by examinations in the State Department, but it applied to only thirteen places.

The era following the Civil War was marked by a large increase in the number of appointive offices which were promptly converted to spoils uses, and by administrative scandals so gross and far reaching that they threatened to smirch the integrity of the Presidency itself. Somewhat sluggishly public opinion began to develop against the abuses of patronage. The Democratic platform of 1868 demanded "reform of abuses in the administration, the expulsion of corrupt men from office, the abrogation of useless offices." Four years later both parties declared civil-service reform to be necessary, and subsequently planks on the subject have been inserted in their national platforms with two or three exceptions.<sup>2</sup>

Attitude of  
parties on  
civil-service  
reform

<sup>1</sup> *Actual Government*, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> The Democratic plank of 1872 was as follows: "The civil service of the government has become a mere instrument of partisan tyranny and personal ambition, and an object of selfish greed. It is a scandal and reproach upon free institutions, and breeds a demoralization dangerous to the perpetuity of republican government. We therefore regard a thorough reform of the civil service as one of the most pressing necessities of the hour; that honesty, capacity, and fidelity constitute the only valid

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Nevertheless, the declarations of the parties were to be taken with a grain of salt, and civil service reformers continued to receive the unmitigated abuse of "stalwart" practical politicians of both camps. How little platform planks on the subject really meant was shown by the fate of the promising reform measure enacted in 1871, following the agitation started by Congressman Thomas A. Jenckes, of Rhode Island. This law authorized the President to make regulations to ascertain the fitness of candidates in respect to age, health, character, knowledge, and ability. Grant showed his good faith in the matter by appointing a leading reformer, George William Curtis, chairman of the commission to enforce the law, but embarrassments were heaped upon it, and after 1873, Congress refused even the meager appropriation necessary to carry on its work. Not till the assassination of Garfield by a disappointed office seeker in 1881 did civil service reformers find themselves backed by a public demand that was irresistible. While Garfield lay dying at Elberon the National Civil Service Reform League was organized. Ever since it has done valiant service both in agitating for legislation on the subject and in watching over its subsequent administration.

Pendleton  
Act of  
1883

A year later Senator George H. Pendleton, of Ohio, introduced a civil-service bill which passed both houses of Congress, and became law with the approval of President Arthur on January 16, 1883. The Pendleton Act was "one of the most skillfully devised statutes ever passed by a legislative body," and after forty years of experience it remains the basis on which the federal civil service rests.

claim to public employment; that the offices of the government cease to be a matter of arbitrary favoritism and patronage, and that public station become again a post of honor." The Republican plank of the same year stated that: "Any system of the civil service under which the subordinate positions of the government are considered rewards for mere party zeal is fatally demoralizing, and we therefore favor a reform of the system by laws which shall abolish the evils of patronage and make honesty, efficiency, and fidelity the essential qualifications for public positions, without practically creating a life tenure of office."

## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

An important feature of the Act was the placing of large discretionary powers in the hands of the President. The extent to which these powers have been exercised is shown by the following statement giving the number of offices, exclusive of the growth of the service, which have been transferred to the classified list by each successive administration: Arthur, 15,573; Cleveland, first term, 11,757; Harrison, 10,535; Cleveland, second term, 38,961; McKinley, 3,261; Roosevelt, 34,766; Taft, 56,868; Wilson, to June 30, 1917, about 40,000. Curiously enough, a motive akin to that of spoilsmen aided in the extension of the reform. By executive orders bringing offices which had been filled on partisan grounds under the classified service, the incumbents were protected to some extent against the assaults of the opposition party when it succeeded to power. At least it could not dislodge them without seeming to take a step backward in a reform movement which had come to command wide popular support.

Turning from the federal service to that of states, counties, and cities, the picture is much less encouraging. New York was the first state to adopt a civil-service Act in May, 1883. Massachusetts followed the example of New York a year later. From that date until 1905 the movement lagged, but, beginning with the latter year, ten other states have enacted civil-service laws.<sup>1</sup> One of the ten—Connecticut—subsequently passed a repealer, the only case of backsliding so far recorded. Although differing widely in scope and effectiveness, the state laws on the subject follow the main outlines of the Pendleton Act. Some of the state laws apply to the state service only. In four states—New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Ohio—permissive or mandatory clauses applying to cities are included. Considering the bitter opposition of

Civil service  
reform in  
state and  
local gov-  
ernment

<sup>1</sup> Illinois and Wisconsin, 1905; Colorado and Indiana, 1907; New Jersey, 1908; Ohio, 1912; California, 1913; Connecticut also in 1913 but repealed the law in 1921; Kansas, 1916; Maryland, 1920. New York, Ohio, California, and Colorado have constitutional provisions relating to this matter.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

the politicians to every extension of civil-service reform, it is a matter for distinct congratulation that more than 350 cities are now under some form of the merit system. The list includes all of the twenty largest cities in the country and seventy-two out of the one hundred largest according to the census of 1920. County government, however, remains a stronghold of the spoils system. Out of the 3,065 counties in the United States only a score have adopted any form of civil-service tests.

Classified  
and un-  
classified  
positions

Under the rules drawn up during the first year of the Pendleton Act nearly 14,000 offices were classified, *i.e.*, made subject to examination—leaving about 96,000 federal positions outside the merit system. On June 30, 1922, there were in the executive civil service of the United States approximately 420,688 classified and 140,175 unclassified employees.<sup>1</sup> In other words, while the percentage of federal offices filled by competitive examination rose from 12.7 in 1883 to 75 in 1922, the growth of the service as a whole was so tremendous that at the end of the period the number of places still not under the merit system showed an increase of 44,000. The same expansion has gone on, although probably to a less degree, in the service of state and local governments, which as we have just noted have lagged considerably behind the federal government in the application of the merit system. In spite of the progress made since 1883, therefore, the volume of political patronage in the country as a whole is doubtless greater than ever before.

United  
States civil  
service com-  
mission

Under the Pendleton Act the President is authorized to appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, a Civil Service Commission composed of three members, not more than two of whom shall be of the same party. Each commissioner receives a salary of \$5,000 annually and necessary traveling expenses. It is important to note

<sup>1</sup> According to an estimate kindly supplied by Mr. John T. Doyle, secretary of the United States Civil Service Commission, possibly 50,000 of the unclassified employees were laborers, of whom some 20,000 are subject to tests of physical fitness.



## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

that the Civil Service Commission is not attached in any way to any of the executive departments, nor subject to the direction of any of the heads of those departments. On the contrary, it is an independent agency of government free from all control except that of the President himself. The duty of the Commission is to aid the President, as he may request, in preparing suitable rules to carry the Civil Service Act into effect. When such rules have been promulgated it becomes the duty of all officers of the United States in the departments affected by them to aid in their enforcement. Moreover, the Commission is given power to make investigations into and reports upon all matters concerned with the administration of the Act and its own rules and regulations. To this extent, therefore, the Commission may even sit in judgment upon the executive departments subject to the civil-service law.

Among other things the rules of the Commission shall provide "for open, competitive examinations for testing the fitness of applicants for the public service now classified or to be classified hereunder."<sup>1</sup> Such examinations must be practical in their character, relating so far as may be to matters which will fairly test the relative capacity and fitness of the persons examined to discharge the duties of the service into which they seek appointment. All classified offices shall be filled by selections according to grade from among those graded highest as the result of competitive examinations. The Commission is authorized to appoint a chief examiner and such other employees as are necessary to hold examinations in Washington and in one or more places in each state, and in general to carry out the provisions of the law and its own rules.

"Open competitive examinations"

The meat of the great reform of 1883 is to be found in the foregoing provisions of the Pendleton Act. Par-

<sup>1</sup> To certain positions appointments may be made without examination or upon noncompetitive examinations. (See list, Schedule A, p. 84, *Thirty-ninth Annual Report*, 1922.) Also by an amendment of July 25, 1914, the Commission is given power under certain safeguards to dispense with examinations in cases where qualified persons are so rare as to make such examinations inadvisable.

Safeguards  
against po-  
litical in-  
fluence

ticularly important is the clause providing for "open, competitive examinations for testing the fitness of applicants." In other words merit, not favoritism, was henceforth to decide appointments. So clearly is this its purpose that civil-service reform itself is frequently and perhaps more aptly called the "merit system."<sup>1</sup> Next to the disregard of fitness the fundamental evil of the spoils system was that under it appointments were anything but open. Under the merit system they are opened wide to all citizens of the United States possessing the necessary qualifications as set forth in the rules and in the announcements for each examination prepared by the Commission.<sup>2</sup> The spoils system made appointments depend upon the favor of Senators or Congressmen, but the Pendleton Act specifically enjoins them from furnishing recommendations to examiners and appointing officers except as to the character and residence of the applicant. Another safeguard against the use of influence is provided by a rule prohibiting questions concerning the political or religious opinions of any applicant. Recommendations which make such disclosures are not considered or filed and the persons sending them are so informed.

Is the merit  
system "aca-  
demic"?

One of the commonest objections to the merit system among the uninformed is that examinations are too "academic" or too "literary" in character, thus unduly favoring college students or other persons who have "book

<sup>1</sup> Although commonly used in the narrower sense, civil-service reform might be taken to include any change designed to improve the civil service, as, *e.g.*, a better ordering of departmental work or organization. The term "merit system," on the other hand, is perfectly definite in meaning. While the two terms are interchangeable in ordinary usage there have been instances of politicians who asserted that although unalterably opposed to civil-service reform they were thoroughly in favor of the merit system!

<sup>2</sup> By an amendment of July 25, 1914, the Commission may, if there is a lack of eligibles who are citizens, examine persons who are not citizens, but the latter shall not be certified for appointment so long as citizens are eligible. Under state and municipal civil-service rules, also, examinations are generally restricted to citizens, a fact which places a considerable premium on naturalization. See W. B. Munro, *The Government of American Cities*, p. 110.

## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

knowledge' only. In this connection spoilsmen of the "stalwart" variety frequently indulged in stories of a type similar to that of the applicant for a position as letter carrier who was alleged to have been asked in a civil-service examination, "How many miles is the sun distant from the earth?" According to the tale the applicant stated in reply that he did not remember the exact number of miles, but was certain that the sun was so far distant that it would never interfere with him in the performance of his duties as a letter carrier! It need hardly be said that such stories were pure inventions, designed solely to cast ridicule on the merit system.<sup>1</sup> One may well contrast with them the action taken by Roosevelt following the issuance of his order that Texas rangers be placed under the rules of the Civil Service Commission. Congressmen and others joined in a lively outcry over this order, declaring that men fit for so strenuous a job could never be chosen by examination. The President asked the objectors what qualities were needed and was told, "Men who can ride a horse, shoot a gun, and speak Spanish." Immediately Roosevelt issued an order to the Civil Service Commission directing them to examine applicants for Texas Rangers as to their ability to ride a horse, shoot a gun, and speak Spanish.

In point of fact every effort is made, as the civil-service law itself directs, to employ tests in all examinations of a practical character, designed to discover special fitness for the kind of employment concerned. For many minor mechanical jobs the only "academic" or "literary" performance required of competitors is the mere filling in and signing of an application blank. In examinations for the various trades so called "practical," "operating," or "performance" tests are largely used. Thus applicants for employment as truck drivers, chauffeurs, or motorcycle operators are required to take out their respective machines and demonstrate ability to handle them in the midst

Practical  
tests

<sup>1</sup> For the way in which one such story was run down by Roosevelt while a member of the U. S. Civil Service Commission, see his *Autobiography*, p. 153, also W. D. Lewis, *The Life of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 92.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

of ordinary traffic. Applicants for paving jobs in the department of streets and highways are supplied with the tools and materials of their trade and tested as to the amount and quality of the paving laid in a given time. Applicants for positions as stenographers and typists are required to take dictation of fair material and transcribe it at standard rates of speed or do actual typing. In many examinations for technical jobs a larger or smaller part of a man's final rating depends upon the amount of experience he has had in his line of work. For this reason high-school and college students, instead of being at an advantage, are really at a disadvantage, since few of them have had time to gain practical experience. Far from being too academic, American civil-service tests are frequently criticized as being too narrowly practical for the best results in permanent appointments. English examinations for higher grade offices lay much more stress on university training, the object being not so much to discover the immediate fitness of candidates for the work they are to take up first as to ascertain what their ability to do the work will be after they have learned it by experience in service.

### Selecting policemen

Tests of the sort commonly employed by larger cities for the police force give a good idea of the range and flexibility of civil-service methods. Applicants must have the requisite certificates of good character and must qualify as to height and physical stamina before being admitted to the mental examination. The latter may include a few simple tests in the common branches and it will certainly include questions regarding the location of police stations, fire stations, and hospitals in the neighborhood where the applicant lives. In addition, after being told to be observant, the applicant is taken for a brief period into a room containing a variety of furniture and other articles, and upon coming out is asked to give a description of what he saw therein—a fair test, one would think, of his ability to observe and to give evidence in court. Or a notice describing a certain fugitive from justice is read to the assembled applicants which they are required to reproduce as closely

## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

as possible from memory. All civil-service examinations to fill positions where the employee must come in contact with the general public, or where he must use unusual discretion and judgment in performing his duties, lay great stress upon the oral interview, carefully handled by qualified examiners. Having passed all the foregoing tests, the applicant for a job on the force must then present himself for an oral interview, conducted by men of large experience in choosing police officers. Questions are asked with the purpose of ascertaining the probable bearing of the applicant in dealing with citizens in various emergencies, his real reasons for desiring to get on the force, and the like. Incidentally, applicants who admit, as some do, that their motive is to wear a uniform, twirl a club, or play in the police band, do not create the most favorable impression. Finally, before recommendations for appointment are decided upon, a painstaking inquiry is made into the past life of all who succeed in passing the various tests. Loafers, men who have engaged in shady pursuits or who have a bad record in any way, are excluded.

An objection frequently made to the merit system is that while it may be applied successfully to minor clerical and technical jobs, it is quite unsuited to positions of a professional character. Admittedly the problem presented by the latter is a difficult and delicate one. A crowd of doctors cannot be brought into a room and there examined like so many schoolboys to discover the one best fitted for the post of health officer. The best men would refuse to submit to such an examination and only incompetents would present themselves. The difficulty is met in part at least by the nonassembled test. This means simply that candidates are not required to meet in a given room and take the examination simultaneously. Instead, a suitable task is set, as, for example, the writing of a thesis in the case of candidates for appointment as engineer, statistician, or economist; the work on this assignment is done individually and when all the papers have been sent in they are passed upon by eminent specialists. In addition a search-

Nonassembled tests



ing investigation is made of the candidates' education, training, achievements, and personal qualifications, each of which may be given a certain predetermined weight and counted in making up the final averages. By nonassembled tests the United States Civil Service Commission has filled successfully hundreds of highly technical positions requiring executive and organizing ability in the Bureau of Mines, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Public Health Service, and many other bureaus and departments. Cities and states are also employing this method for positions ranging in salary from \$3,000 to \$8,000 a year. There is a possibility which is now engaging the earnest study of civil-service administrators that examinations may be somewhat shortened and their results improved by the use in connection with some of the tests already given of intelligence tests similar to those employed in the army during the World War.<sup>1</sup>

Eligibility  
and ap-  
pointments

In the federal civil-service examination papers are rated on a scale of 100, the subjects therein being given such relative weights as the Commission may prescribe. All competitors rated at 70 or more are eligible for appointment.<sup>2</sup> Following the marking of the papers a list of eligibles is made out, rating them in the order of their grades from highest to lowest. From the head of this list the commission certifies to the appointing officer three names for each vacancy to be filled. Certification is made without regard to sex except in cases where the appointing

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of experiments in the actual use of psychological tests, see *Intelligence Tests in the Public Service*, by C. N. Amsden of the Los Angeles County Civil Service Commission, an address as yet unpublished given before the June, 1923, meeting of the Assembly of Civil Service Commissions in New York City. A very valuable general paper supplemented by samples of examinations with results and diagrams is entitled "Progress in Civil Service Tests," by H. J. Filer and L. J. O'Rourke of the United States Civil Service Commission, in the *Journal of Personnel Research*, vol. i, no. 2 (March, 1923).

<sup>2</sup> Except in cases specified in the Urgency Deficiency Act of July 11, 1919, which makes the passing mark 65 in the case of honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, marines, and widows of such, also wives of injured soldiers, sailors, and marines.

## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

officer has otherwise specified. Unless the latter objects to any of the persons certified and is sustained by the commission in his objection, he must make selection for the first vacancy with sole reference to merit and fitness from among the highest three names on the list. Selections for second and subsequent vacancies are made in the same manner. Certification of the highest three is a peculiarity of the American practice. In England the appointing officer does not have the right of choice, candidates being appointed in the exact order of the standing they have earned. Within limits the American method enables the appointing official to give preference, if he so wishes, to desirable personal qualities in the applicants which have not been registered in their examination averages. Also, if inclined to disregard the plain injunction of the law to consider merit and fitness only, he may consult somewhat his own racial, religious, or political prejudices, assuming him to have procured information regarding candidates on these points through channels not connected with the Civil Service Commission.

During the first six months or the first year, if so fixed by regulation, the civil-service appointee is on probation. If after full and fair trial his conduct or capacity is not satisfactory to the appointing officer the probationer is notified in writing with a full statement of reasons and his employment terminates. Retention in the service during the probationary period confirms his absolute appointment. In the United States service the proportion of failures on probation is very small, being about one half of 1 per cent.

One of the greatest technical difficulties in the administration of the federal Civil Service Act is due to the clause requiring that appointments to the public service in Washington shall be apportioned among the several states and territories and the District of Columbia upon the basis of population at the last preceding census. Distant states and those which are backward in educational facilities do not furnish sufficient quotas of eligibles. The District of Columbia and states near at hand, because of the willing-

Probation

Apportion-  
ment

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

ness of their applicants to accept low salaries, have always had a much larger share of appointments than that to which they were entitled. By an amendment of March 7, 1918, a number of offices in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Government Printing Office, and elsewhere, which were particularly hard to fill under the apportionment rule, were exempted from its provisions.

### Veteran preference

Honorably discharged soldiers and sailors enjoyed certain preferences in the service of the United States prior to the passage of the Pendleton Act. These were continued by the Act and have been extended considerably by more recent enactments. At present preference is given to honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, and marines, and their widows, and to the wives of injured soldiers, sailors, and marines who themselves lack qualifications, but whose wives are qualified, as follows: (1) release from all age limitations, and for many positions also from height and weight requirements; (2) requirements of an average of 65 per cent only (instead of 70) for eligibility; (3) appointment without regard to apportionment by states; and (4) the placing of their names in the order of their ratings above those of all competitors who did not have military service. Veteran preference is not limited to veterans of the war with Germany. It applies to all former soldiers, sailors, and marines, including commissioned officers, army field clerks, the S. A. T. C., enlisted or commissioned army and navy nurses, persons who enlisted in officers' training camps during the war with Germany, persons who served in the U. S. Coast Guard, and members of the National Guard who were mustered into the federal service. Also the commission may exempt from the physical requirements for any position a disabled and honorably discharged veteran upon certification of the Federal Board of Vocational Education that he has been specially trained for and has passed a test demonstrating his physical ability for the class of positions in which employment is sought. When reductions are made in the force of any executive

## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

department ex-service men who are equally qualified must be retained in preference to others.

There has been a great deal of heated argument, pro and con, and not a little political agitation, over veteran preference. It may be conceded that service in the army or navy develops certain qualities useful in various branches of civil administration, notably municipal and state police forces, where such experience is often heavily weighted. Loyalty to the government as shown by a willingness to defend it in time of war should be a valuable element in the morale of any departmental force. On the other hand, the mere fact of honorable discharge is no certain index to the spirit and quality of a man's military service. If accepted uncritically it may lead to the anomaly of rewarding with public offices thousands of men "who were inducted into the army in spite of their efforts to escape their military obligations, who did not engage the enemy, and whose entire time was spent in enforced furtherance of their own moral, mental, and physical development under army instructions and training."<sup>1</sup>

Arguments  
on veteran  
preference

So far as disabled soldiers and sailors and their wives are concerned, gratitude is a national duty and privilege of the first rank. It should be met not by making public office a gratuity, but by a generous compensation policy. Consideration of the various preferences granted former soldiers and sailors shows that all of them lower more or less the standards required for effective service. The deleterious consequences are not great at present, but they are certain to become so when the average age of veterans of the World War passes the expectation of efficiency. In spite of assertions frequently made on this subject it may be doubted whether the demand for soldier preference has anything like a popular majority behind it. Certainly the contrary is indicated by the fate of the proposed amendment to the constitution of New York state extending preferences already enjoyed by veterans of the Civil

Effects of  
veteran  
preference

<sup>1</sup> Major-General John F. O'Ryan, quoted in *Thirty-eighth Annual Report, U. S. Civil Service Commission, 1921*, p. xviii.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

War to veterans of all later wars. After a well-contested campaign of education it was defeated, November 8, 1921 by a popular vote of 1,090,418 to 699,697.<sup>1</sup>

Women in  
the civil  
service

Under the merit system women have been admitted to the federal service in constantly increasing numbers. Out of more than half a million appointments made between 1883 and 1921, 27 per cent fell to them. Such discrimination in favor of men as still exists is due to the legal right of appointing officers to specify whether men or women are wanted. Regardless of this right, women are now admitted to all examinations. During the earlier period of the merit system they made up only one seventh of the classified service, generally occupying clerical or sub-clerical positions. With the advent of typewriters, stenography, card indexes, and telephones, the number of women employees increased rapidly. In scientific work also appointing officials found that for the lower-salaried positions they could secure much better prepared helpers by calling for women. During the World War the proportion of women appointed rose to 70 per cent of the total. Subsequently the preference accorded men who had been in military service has caused a decrease in the number of women appointed. In 1920, Mrs. Helen H. Gardener was appointed one of the members of the United States Civil Service Commission, the first woman to hold that office.

Protection  
of civil  
servants

The Pendleton Act provides various privileges and safeguards for persons in the classified service. It states specifically that they are under no obligation to contribute to political funds or to render any political service, and that they will be protected against removal or being otherwise prejudiced for refusing to do so.<sup>2</sup> Corresponding to this privilege, civil servants are obligated not to use their official authority or influence to coerce the political actions of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Thirty-ninth Annual Report, State Civil Service Commission*, New York, 1921, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed discussion of political assessments and partisan activity, see chap. xiii.



## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

others. Under an Act of Congress approved August 24, 1912 (37 Stat., L. 555), which has been called "the Magna Charta of government employees," no person in the classified civil service of the United States may be removed therefrom except for such cause as will promote the efficiency of the service and for reasons given in writing. The person whose removal is sought shall have notice of the same and of any charges preferred against him, and be furnished with a copy thereof, and also be allowed a reasonable time for personally answering the same in writing and affidavits in support thereof. No examination of witnesses nor any trial or hearing is required except in the discretion of the officer making the removal.

The Act of 1912 also provides that membership in any organization of postal employees designed to improve working conditions, including hours of labor and wages, shall not be ground for dismissal nor for reduction in rank or compensation. However, such organization of postal employees must not be affiliated with any outside organization imposing an obligation or duty upon them to strike, or proposing to assist them in any strike against the United States.<sup>1</sup> Further, civil servants individually and collectively have the right to petition Congress or any member thereof, and to furnish information to either House of Congress or to any committee or member thereof. By an Act passed in 1892 (27 Stat., 340), laborers and mechanics employed by the federal government or by contractors on public work are restricted to an eight-hour workday. Under the provisions of the Act of August 24, 1912, more than two hundred and seventy-five units of the Federal Employees Union have been formed and twenty-five others are now being organized.<sup>2</sup> These units are located in forty-six states, the District of Colum-

Organiza-  
tions of fed-  
eral em-  
ployees

<sup>1</sup> In certain European countries organization of civil servants has gone much further than in the United States. Cf. E. M. Sait, *Government and Politics of France*, p. 119, and the author's *Government and Politics of Switzerland*, pp. 218, 247.

<sup>2</sup> E. J. Newmyer, *The Story of the Federal Employees Union*, leaflet published by the National Federation of Federal Employees, undated.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

bia, Canada, Canal Zone, Alaska, Hawaii, the Philippines, Cuba, and Porto Rico. All of them are federated into one compact group known as the National Federation of Federal Employees, with headquarters at Washington.<sup>1</sup> The National Federation has a total membership of more than 50,000 government employees. Its constitution provides that "under no circumstances shall the Union engage in, or support, strikes against the United States Government." The methods which it employs to attain its ends are petitioning Congress, creating and fostering public sentiment favorable to proposed reforms, co-operation with government officials and employees, and legislation or other lawful means. Among its various activities the National Federation contributed largely to the success of two highly important pieces of legislation—the Retirement Act of 1920 and the Classification Act of 1923—both of which will be described in some detail later in this chapter.

### Efficiency ratings

Examinations are employed not only to discover fitness to enter the civil service, but also to determine promotions therein.<sup>2</sup> Better than occasional set tests as a basis for determining promotions, however, are continuous records of the diligence, punctuality, faithfulness, resourcefulness, and accuracy shown by employees. With the latter principle in view an Act was passed in 1912 (37 Stat., 413), providing for the establishment under the Civil Service Commission of efficiency ratings for the classified service in the District of Columbia. The ratings are based on records kept in each of the executive departments. A certain minimum rating of efficiency must be attained by an employee before he may be promoted, also ratings are fixed below which no employee may fall without being demoted or dismissed. Of course there is a possibility that personal likes and dislikes may enter into the ratings given by supervising officers in the executive departments. Con-

<sup>1</sup> At 1423 New York Avenue, N. W. The president of the National Federation is Luther C. Steward; secretary-treasurer, J. P. McKeon.

<sup>2</sup> For the law and rules on this point cf. *Thirty-ninth Annual Report, U. S. Civil Service Commission, 1922*, pp. 9, 74.

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sidering the enormous number of employees involved, however, it would seem to be the fairest plan that could be devised. Definite standards of the sort provided are certainly preferable to lack of standards and the consequent opportunity for the free play of favoritism. In 1916 a further step was taken along this line by the creation within the Civil Service Commission of an independent Bureau of Efficiency to take charge of the duties relating to efficiency ratings. The bureau is also given the duty of investigating the administrative needs of the service relating to personnel in the several executive departments and independent establishments of the federal government. It is only fair to say, however, that even among civil-service administrators there is some criticism of the present system of efficiency ratings. One authority holds that "they have proved a stumbling-block and bugbear in both public and private employment. Few systems of ratings satisfactory to employees, to administrative officers, to the employers, or to the public have been evolved, and these have been on only a small scale."<sup>1</sup>

Earlier critics of the merit system urged that it established what amounted to life tenure, that once in the service the employee, no matter how incompetent, was protected in his job as long as he chose to hold it. Beside the evils of a bureaucratic caste of office holders thus created, it was asserted that civil servants, feeling themselves safe from attack, would grow lax in the performance of their duties. According to one eminent authority, civil-service laws were designed to a very considerable extent "for the purpose of protecting subordinates against their chiefs, and that is scarcely to be conceived as a method . . . helpful to administrative efficiency."<sup>2</sup> Since this was written, however, the system of efficiency ratings sketched above with its provisions regarding demotions and dismiss-

Discipline  
and removals

<sup>1</sup> O. C. Short, *Personnel Administration in Government*, a paper as yet unpublished delivered at the 16th annual meeting of the Assembly of Civil Service Commissions, New York, June 20, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> H. Croly, *The Promise of American Life*, p. 335.

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sals has been introduced. Under the federal law removals may be made not only because of physical and mental unfitness for the position, but also because of criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or notoriously disgraceful conduct; intentionally making a false statement in matters connected with the civil service system; and the habitual use of intoxicating beverages to excess. Appointment on probation also affords an opportunity to get rid of undesirable candidates. All together, therefore, the disciplinary means at the disposal of executive officials would seem to be sufficient. Certainly it was no part of the purpose of civil-service reformers to tie the hands of superior officials and to establish a caste of life-long office holders. The National Civil Service Reform League has even opposed review of dismissals by the courts because of the consequent impairment of discipline, uncertainty of tenure, delay, cost, and demands upon the precious time of the removing official. What the reformers did protest against—and with entire justice—was removal on purely political grounds. In this connection it should be recalled that interference with discipline by politicians was one of the reasons which led to the adoption of the merit system. Certainly such interference was much more common and annoying under the spoils system than the disciplinary trouble complained of above has been under civil-service reform.

Superannuation, Retirement Act of 1920

In any large working force the problem of the superannuated employee is a most difficult one. To continue such employees at work means an impairment of the efficiency of the service; to dismiss them after years of faithful labor is heartless, particularly in the cases of the many whose salaries have been so low as to make adequate savings for old age impossible. An important contribution to the solution of the problem of superannuation in the federal government was made by the passage of the Retirement Act of May 22, 1920.<sup>1</sup> This Act establishes a

<sup>1</sup> Chap. 195, 41 Stat., L. 614. The Act is reprinted with amendments and notes on important decisions in the *Thirty-ninth Annual Report, U. S. Civil Service Commission*, 1922, p. 99. For criticism of the Act from the

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compulsory, part-contributory, retirement annuity or pension system applying to all employees in the classified civil service of the United States. From the basic salaries of those who are to enjoy the benefits of the system the government makes a deduction of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent to be applied to its maintenance. At the age of retirement fixed for railway postal clerks at sixty-two, for mechanics, city and rural letter carriers, and post-office clerks at sixty-five, and for all others at seventy, employees are automatically separated from the service. If, however, the head of the department certifies to the Civil Service Commission that the employee is willing to remain and that his continuance will be advantageous to the service he may be continued for periods of two years at a time. After the Act has been effective ten years, however, continuances are not to exceed four years beyond the retirement age. Those who have served the government fifteen years or more at the time of their retirement become eligible to an annuity, the amount of which varies in accordance with the following scale:

Class	Length of service in years	Amount of Annuity		
		In percentage of average annual basic compensation for ten years prior to retirement	However,	
			not more than	nor less than
A	30 or more	60	\$720	\$360
B	27 to 30	54	648	324
C	24 to 27	48	576	288
D	21 to 24	42	504	252
E	18 to 21	36	432	216
F	15 to 18	30	360	180

employees' point of view together with proposals for amendment, see *Building Up Retirement*, pamphlet, undated, published by the National Federation of Federal Employees. The standard treatise on this subject is L. Meriam, *Principles Governing the Retirement of Public Employees*, published by the Institute for Government Research, 1918.



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Persons separated from the service before reaching the age of retirement are refunded the amounts contributed toward their annuity plus compound interest at 4 per cent. In the case of a beneficiary who dies before receiving in the form of annuities an amount equal to his contributions plus 4 per cent interest compounded annually thereon, the difference between the latter amount and what he actually received is payable to his legal representatives. A particularly beneficent provision of the act makes immediately eligible for an annuity at the rates stated above any person in the classified service who becomes totally disabled through no fault of his own after fifteen years of employment by the government.

Civil service as a career

According to a recent report of the United State Civil Service Commission, "government work no longer attracts the best students of the schools. The number of graduates of higher institutions applying for examination has fallen off greatly, and some of the schools report that they advise their graduates to keep out of the government service. The reasons given are inadequate compensation, lack of recognition of individual work, restricted freedom of action, and the lack of opportunity for merited advancement."<sup>1</sup> It would be hard to formulate an indictment against the civil-service system more serious in its implications than the foregoing. The situation described is perfectly well known to both faculty and students in our colleges and universities. At the present time the American undergraduate contemplating a permanent civil-service career is a rare exception, a state of affairs strikingly in contrast with that prevailing in English and European universities, where many of the most promising men diligently prepare themselves for just such careers. It is not the case that initial compensation in the civil service of the United States is too low. On the contrary, a few college men and women and many others of good ability are glad to se-

<sup>1</sup> *Thirty-eighth Annual Report, 1921*, p. xxxiv. For an earlier discussion of this situation see E. B. K. Foltz, *The Federal Civil Service as a Career* (1909).

## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

cure employment for a few years in government positions, leaving, however, as soon as suitable openings in the private field present themselves. Nor is there any lack of security and permanence of tenure under the civil-service law itself. Fundamentally, the trouble is due to the conviction that opportunities for promotion to higher salaries and positions of distinguished service are lacking. And such opportunities are lacking for the reason that so large a number of the more prominent offices under our government are still filled by political appointment. Not till this condition is changed, not until well-remunerated and influential careers become possible for the more gifted men and women in the civil service, can we expect the promising youth of the country to look forward to it as a lifetime pursuit.

So far as the rectification of salary inequalities within the civil service is concerned, an important step forward was taken by the passage of the Classification Act of 1923.<sup>1</sup> This Act provides for a Personnel Classification Board to be composed of the director of the Bureau of the Budget, a member of the Civil Service Commission and the chief of the Bureau of Efficiency, or alternates designated by each of these. A point of special interest to women is the provision (Sec. 4) that "in determining the rate of compensation which an employee shall receive, the principle of equal compensation for equal work irrespective of sex shall be followed." Under the Act the board is authorized to classify government positions as follows: (1) professional and scientific service, seven grades, starting with salaries of from \$1,860 to \$7,500; (2) sub-professional service, eight grades, \$900 to \$3,000; (3) clerical, administrative, and fiscal, fourteen grades, \$1,140 to \$7,500; (4) custodial, ten grades, \$600 to \$3,000; and (5) clerical-mechanical, five grades, from 45-50 cents an hour to 80-90 cents an hour. Commenting on the possibilities of this Act, Prof. J. M. Gaus writes: "It establishes, at least, a coherent and unified salary plan. . . . It may mean, too,

Classifica-  
tion Act of  
1923

<sup>1</sup> Chap. 265, 67th Cong., 4th Sess.

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the further opening up of careers in the public service. . . . The new plan will provide for some scheme of advancement or promotion from grade to grade upon the fulfillment of qualifications, and for salary increases upon the maintenance of efficiency. This should encourage able men and women to enter the service, and invigorate those within it to their best efforts. The plan should also eliminate much inequality and favoritism in salary payments and promotions."<sup>1</sup>

I  
7  
I

Newer aspects of civil-service reform

It is a one-sided view to regard civil-service reform as a negative movement, designed simply to eliminate the abuses of the spoils system. The positive side of its work, that of providing businesslike methods of handling the great employment problems of government, is coming into greater and greater prominence. Personnel research defined as "the study of the conditions under which productive work may be made a truly integral part of living"<sup>2</sup> may be looked to for important contributions in this field. The Bureau of Public Personnel Administration of the Institute for Government Research, a private organization with headquarters in Washington,<sup>3</sup> is now engaged in preparing a series of intensive studies dealing with such matters as securing high-grade recruits, devising and holding of suitable tests, classification of services on the basis of duties, working out and installation of equitable compensation plans, devising of effective efficiency rating systems, keeping the labor turnover down to reasonable proportions, determining the proper order of lay-off when force must be reduced, and securing fair retirement systems. During the past few years the largest single problem before the United States Civil Service Commission has been the reduction of the classified force from 642,432 at the peak of war needs in 1918 to 420,688 in 1922.

<sup>1</sup> "Reclassifying the Civil Service," *New Republic*, vol. xxxv, pp. 256-258 (Aug. 1, 1923).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. L. L. Thurstone, *Methods of Analyzing Personnel Problems*, a paper as yet unpublished, read at the meeting of the National Civil Service Assembly, New York, June 19, 1923.

<sup>3</sup> At 26 Jackson Place, W. F. Willoughby, director.

## SPOILS SYSTEM: CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

Civil-service reform in the United States has to its credit some inspiring achievements. On the other hand, it has fallen far short of the predictions made in its infancy by those ardent supporters who regarded it as the *sine qua non* of good government. To a considerable degree, however, this partial failure may be ascribed to the large amount of spoils still left to poison our politics. Not till counties, cities, and states generally have adopted and perfected comprehensive systems of civil-service reform can the battle be counted as won. Even in the federal service the President is still called upon to perform the heart-breaking task of filling more than 15,000 positions. There are now 14,000 first, second, and third class postmasters,<sup>1</sup> and in addition to these the principal officers outside of Washington in the customs service, internal revenue service, mint and assay service, reclamation service, immigration service, and the field services of the Department of Justice are nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The attempt to enforce prohibition by a staff entirely exempt from the merit system has resulted in scandals which are "the blackest spot on the horizon of civil service" at the present time.<sup>2</sup> Contrast with the measureless corruption and chicane in this field the honest, efficient performance of the anti-narcotic bureau, operating under civil-service rules. No one questions the necessity of the appointment of higher policy-forming officials on political grounds. But the number of such officials even in the greater governments of the world is

Too much  
political  
patronage  
still left in  
United  
States

<sup>1</sup> On March 13, 1917, after Congress had failed to pass a law providing for their classification, President Wilson issued an order directing the Post Office Department to certify vacancies in first, second, and third class postmasterships to the U. S. Civil Service Commission, the latter to hold open, competitive examinations to fill them. There is nothing to prevent other presidents from following the example of President Wilson. But to permanently classify these offices would require the repeal of present laws providing for their nomination by the President with confirmation by the Senate, also the abrogation of the present four-year term. Cf. *Thirty-fourth Annual Report U. S. Civil Service Commission*, p. ix, for President Wilson's order, and the *Thirty-ninth Annual Report, 1922*, p. xxiii, for the present practice.

<sup>2</sup> W. D. Foulke, *Good Government*, vol. xl, p. 101 (July, 1923).

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infinitesimally small as compared with those nonpolitical offices in which the best results may be secured only through choice by merit and promotion to higher and higher ranges of opportunity and salary in accordance with demonstrated ability. Some measure of the failure of the United States to reach this practical ideal may be gathered from the fact that in 1916 the English government had some fifty-five political offices, chiefly ministerial posts, as contrasted with the more than eighty thousand nonpolitical offices of its permanent civil service.

Civil-service reform still unfinished

Finally, it is to be regretted that the agitation for civil-service reform is being pushed with less vigor and effectiveness than in the early militant days. It has made progress but lost headway. With partial success, certain of the worst abuses which were the targets of reformers in the 'seventies and 'eighties have disappeared. Other political reforms—the short ballot, primary reform, direct legislation, and the like—have come to occupy the center of the stage. It may be conceded also that spoils-men have become somewhat more cautious. The establishment of high, definite personnel standards in many large private business and professional organizations has had a favorable reaction both upon the development of the merit system and in preventing impossible appointments to political jobs. When all is said and done, however, the fact remains that the task of civil-service reform is only partially accomplished. Perhaps it is too much to expect warm human enthusiasm for a cause which proceeds by competitive examinations and glorifies cold-blooded efficiency, but one cannot help wishing for civil-service reform another champion as fervent and virile as young Roosevelt of the New York Assembly and United States Civil Service Commission days.

## BOOK NOTES

ON the official side the annual *Reports of the United States Civil Service Commission* from 1883 to 1923 are a



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mine of accurate and comprehensive information. A file of these reports should be available on reference shelves at the library, and students should be urged to supply themselves with copies for recent years, also with copies of the reports of the civil-service commissions of their state and near-by large cities.

On the reform side the pamphlets and reports issued by the National Civil Service Reform League and by its various state and local branches are invaluable. *Good Government*, the monthly organ of the National League, published at No. 1 West 40th Street, New York city, enables its readers to follow current developments in this field. On the history of the reform movement see W. D. Foulke, *Fighting the Spoilsmen* (1919); and C. R. Fish, *Civil Service and the Patronage* (1905).

Particular interest attaches to D. B. Eaton, *The Civil Service in Great Britain* (1880). Sent to England by President Hayes to study the system there, Eaton's book was first issued as a public document (House Exec. Docs., 2d Sess., 46th Cong., XII, No. 1, pt. 7). It aroused great interest and contributed materially to the success of the reform in the United States. For a later description of the English system with an interesting chapter (IX) comparing it and the American system, see R. Moses, *The Civil Service of Great Britain* (Columbia Univ. Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, LVII, No. 1, 1914). A. L. Lowell, *The Government of England*, also devotes two chapters (Vol. I, Chs. VII, VIII) to this topic.

The various general treatises on political parties cited in Book Notes under Ch. I all present brief accounts of the spoils system and civil service reform, the latest and best being in P. O. Ray, *Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics*, Chs. XIV, XV (1917); and C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*, Ch. XI (1922). Similar brief accounts are to be found in the standard texts on federal government as follows: F. A. Ogg and P. O. Ray, *Introduction to American Government*, pp. 298-310

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(1922); J. T. Young, *The New American Government and Its Work*, Ch. XXVIII (1919); C. A. Beard, *American Government and Politics*, pp. 223-230 (1910); and James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, II, Ch. LXV. From the point of view of state government civil service reform is dealt with by A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States*, pp. 338-342 (1916); and from the municipal point of view by W. B. Munro, *Government of American Cities*, Ch. XI (1921); and F. J. Goodnow and F. G. Bates, *Municipal Government*, Ch. X (1919).

The most authoritative publications in this field are those of the Bureau of Public Personnel Administration of the Institute for Government Research, which has been referred to in the text above. These include L. Meriam, *Principles Governing the Retirement of Public Employees* (1918); L. Mayers, *The Federal Service* (1921); and A. W. Procter, *Principles of Public Personnel Administration* (1922). The Bureau is soon to issue a number of bulletins dealing with the business problems confronting civil service commissions throughout the country.

## CHAPTER XX

### ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

VOTING is not merely a right. In a much truer sense, as we have already had occasion to note, it is a duty. Nor is it a duty easy to perform properly. Registration is a prerequisite; both primaries and elections are of frequent occurrence; ballots are long, involving many kinds of offices and extended lists of candidates; initiative, referendum, and recall votes are increasing in number. Moreover, to vote intelligently requires some knowledge of our government, national, state, and local; some familiarity with its history, particularly in recent times; some acquaintance with our public men; some insight into the economic, sectional, racial, and other groups that are struggling for mastery; and finally some conception of the issues which this struggle has brought forth for contemporary solution. Even these requirements, imposing as they may seem, no longer suffice. Since 1914, the voter in our national elections has been called upon to consider paramount questions involving a knowledge not simply of domestic but of world politics.

What intelligent voting requires

Active citizenship begins, but it does not end, with the mere poking of a ballot into a box at the polls. Voting, with all the details thereby involved, is the bare minimum of what a democracy must ask of many of those upon whom it has conferred the franchise. If popular government is to succeed, it must secure, particularly from its more capable citizens, a variety of additional services. Fortunately for us, this higher obligation has been recognized and honored by men of light and leading from the earliest days of the republic. Every year, however, more

Political services in addition to voting

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

than two millions of our young men and women reach the age of twenty-one, the vast majority of whom thereupon acquire the legal right to vote. Political consciousness may have come much earlier, but political interest and a desire for public service are frequently not manifested until after an economic foothold has been secured and a family has been founded.<sup>1</sup> Owing to the short time that has elapsed since the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment the number of American women of all ages who are sincerely eager to be of public service is extraordinarily large. For the more promising citizens of these and other classes some discussion of the various avenues of approach to political activity may be helpful.

Kinds of  
political  
service

To the great majority, of course, political service can be and should be a part-time occupation only. For this reason the advice given by President Hadley of Yale is of peculiar value. Starting with the assumption that every American citizen ought to assume political responsibilities, he holds that there are at least four different ways in which this can be done. "One may desire to go into politics as a most important part of the business of his life. . . . Another may strive to influence the conduct of our public affairs indirectly, by his activity in behalf of civil-service reform and other measures calculated to promote better government. A third may reserve his political activity for special emergencies, when some grave crisis, national or local, justifies him in an exceptional expenditure of time

<sup>1</sup> As to the dawn of political consciousness, C. E. Merriam, *American Party System*, p. 28, holds that "it frequently appears as early as ten or twelve years of age." The proportion of hereditary voters he places at 75 per cent. Tests of Swarthmore College students in elementary political science classes made during a number of recent years show that under twenty-one years of age, 60 per cent, and over twenty-one, 70 per cent had made a choice of parties. Nearly all, however, disclaimed any intention of voting straight tickets. Family influences, decisions upon a few leading issues, and admiration for prominent political personalities were mentioned in the order named as bases of choice. On the cultivation of political interest among school children cf. *The School Republic* and other works by W. L. Gill; also the excellent series of articles in the form of fiction by W. Heyliger in the *American Boy*, issues of November and December, 1922, and May, 1923.

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and strength. A fourth may content himself with that general influence on the conduct of public affairs which is exercised by every citizen who forms his moral judgment independently and expresses it fearlessly."<sup>1</sup>

Leaving the professional attitude for detailed discussion later, some suggestions may be made for that much larger and extremely useful class of persons who must play on the scrub team of politics. President Hadley cites civil-service reform as an example of the measures calculated to promote better government. In preceding chapters a number of other worthy political causes have been noted, among them direct-primary elections, Corrupt Practices Acts, the short ballot, proportional representation, the initiative, referendum, and recall. Special organizations national in extent exist to promote some of these measures.<sup>2</sup> Citizens who intend to devote themselves to one of these specialized forms of political activity will find membership in such organizations indispensable. There are other organizations, also national in extent but more general in their purpose, which publish periodicals, supply literature, maintain speakers' bureaus, and send experts to communities which are engaged in the solution of certain political problems.<sup>3</sup> Both types of organizations welcome all citizens interested in their work who are eligible under their rules. A small annual fee is charged for membership.

Reform organizations

Citizens interested in city government will find that field well cultivated. There is a national organization, general in scope—the National Municipal League; various state organizations, also general in scope—*e.g.*, the Municipal Government Association of New York state, the Ohio Municipal Association, and the Massachusetts Civic

City government

<sup>1</sup> *Standards of Public Morality*, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the National Civil Service Reform League, 8 W. Fortieth St., New York city; the Short Ballot League, 261 Broadway, New York city; the Proportional Representation League, 1417 Locust St., Philadelphia.

<sup>3</sup> The National Municipal League and the National League of Women Voters, for example. Further information regarding these organizations is given in Book Notes following this chapter.



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League; a national organization of limited aims—the City Planning Conference; national associations composed of municipal corporations or city officials—*e.g.*, the League of American Municipalities, associations of city engineers, health officials, police chiefs, fire chiefs, park superintendents, and the like. In each of the larger cities of the country there are a great variety of local organizations directly concerned with municipal affairs—*e.g.*, voters' leagues, taxpayers' associations, improvement societies, the city club, the bureau of municipal research. Other organizations, although primarily commercial, industrial, or professional in purpose, devote some share of their time to the welfare of the city. Among these may be mentioned chambers of commerce, boards of trade, merchants' associations, labor unions, architects' associations, and medical associations.<sup>1</sup> Political bosses of twenty-five years ago were wont to sneer at all this “goo-goo” activity, but they have since learned to take good government movements more seriously. Among the many notable achievements of the latter the rapid extension of the home rule and optional charter systems and the numerous adoptions of commission and city-manager types of municipal government may be mentioned as contributions of the first importance to the political development of our time.

County gov-  
ernment

Reform organizations are so numerous in American cities that part of their work overlaps. County government, on the other hand, has been aptly called “the ‘dark continent’ of American politics.” There is an enormous and almost virgin field here for cultivation by local organizations somewhat similar to those operating in municipal politics. A recent systematic investigation of county government reveals the encouraging fact that “such organizations as the National Short Ballot Organization, the National Municipal League, the various political science as-

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the work of these various types of municipal reform organizations see W. B. Munro, *The Government of American Cities*, chap. xiv.

## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

sociations and clubs and civic bodies everywhere, are turning their attention to this problem."<sup>1</sup>

State gov-  
ernment

State government has received much more attention than county government. As earlier chapters have made clear, most of the reforms dealing with nominations, elections, and party methods generally have been accomplished by state legislation. Much remains to be done, however, particularly in the line of administrative reorganization. The experience gained under the more progressive forms of city government will be helpful and such organizations as the National Short Ballot Organization, the National Municipal League, and the National Institute of Public Administration are giving a large share of their attention to this field.

Federal  
government

At Washington there are so many investigating and reform organizations that Congress and the departments grow restive at times under their constant prodding and Argus-eyed glare.<sup>2</sup> We are not concerned here with the innumerable lobbying agencies representing various corporate and selfish interests at the national capital.<sup>3</sup> Powerful professional and trade associations interest themselves more or less persistently in federal legislation and administration—*e.g.*, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the Grange, the American Federation of Labor, the Rail-

<sup>1</sup> K. H. Porter, *County and Township Government in the United States*, p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> In this connection special mention should be made of the *Searchlight*, originally published under the auspices of the National Voters' League. The *Searchlight* is now edited by Lynn Haines, 737 Woodward Building, Washington, D. C. "Its purpose is to inform the people with absolute honesty and no bias of any kind what their government, particularly Congress, is doing; . . . to identify through official records the competent and the incompetent, the true and the false, among those who seek reelection to House and Senate. . . . To advance democracy by enabling the people to know and apply the truth about Congress and all other departments of their government at Washington." Recently the title of this publication has been changed to the *Spotlight*.

<sup>3</sup> For a statement regarding lobbyists at work in Washington see Senator Robert La Follette, "The Progressives: What They Stand For and Want," *Saturday Evening Post*, vol. cxcv, no. 37, p. 27 (March 1, 1923).

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road Brotherhoods, the National Education Association.<sup>1</sup> Besides these there are many purely reform organizations which devote themselves to the public welfare, as they conceive it, among them the Anti-Saloon League, the recently formed International Reform Bureau of the World Temperance Foundation, the American Peace Society, the Navy League, the National Security League, the National League of Women Voters, the National Consumers' League, and the American Association for Labor Legislation.

Other  
forms of  
political  
activity

As the foregoing paragraphs show, President Hadley's second method of assuming political responsibilities requires for effectiveness some measure of specialized study of the reform or reforms chosen as "calculated to promote better government." In consequence this method is more likely to be followed by men and women of scholarly training or habit. However, the other three suggested methods of assuming political responsibilities may be undertaken with success by men and women of all walks in life. Regardless of the possession of college degrees or high-school diplomas citizens may come to the front in times of crisis, or they may exert an influence upon the conduct of public affairs at all times by independent judgment and fearless expression of their opinions. Those who go into politics with the purpose of obtaining office may even find a college degree somewhat of an embarrassment at an early stage of their career. Certain it is that the effort to be politically effective in any one of these three ways, and particularly in a professional manner, will involve active membership in political clubs and on political committees.

"Breaking  
into the  
organiza-  
tion"

There is no single method of "breaking into the organization," as Roosevelt phrased it.<sup>2</sup> Much depends upon the intelligence, training, character, and purposes of the man or woman who is making the start. It is obvious also that methods well adapted to one kind of community might prove unsuccessful elsewhere. On the other hand the door to political opportunity stands wide open at all times

<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. E. Merriam, *The American Party System*, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 63.

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and to all classes and conditions of men. Political parties require a great variety of services involving every grade of talent from the highest to the lowest. For part only of this are they able to pay, hence "willing workers" are always welcome. Moreover, political parties can win only by collecting majorities and therefore are much more catholic in welcoming adherents than churches, clubs, corporations, or any other form of association. So true is this that a study of the careers of many prominent American statesmen and of nearly all politicians and office holders of lesser degree will show that they did not choose politics deliberately as a profession; rather they drifted into it partly by chance, partly because so many political doors stood invitingly open to them. As a recent writer puts it in the vernacular, "The typical member of a political club joins in his youth, because he finds that, after a fellow has spent one evening a week at each of such diversions as taking in a vaudeville show, seeing a movie, calling on a girl friend, going to a dance, etc., there still remain one or two evenings a week when a fellow can think of nothing better than to go up to the club and play pinochle or shoot pool."<sup>1</sup> Of course the great majority of such tyros are content merely to pay dues and to take advantage of the social opportunities offered by the club. So far as its political activities are concerned, they simply "go along." Nevertheless, the control of a large mass of mere dues-payers and voters is a political asset of extreme value. On the other hand, a few of the new members of such clubs discover within themselves a real political interest in, and certain aptitudes for, political work. In consequence they

<sup>1</sup> B. Deutsch, "College Students and Politics," *School and Society*, vol. xvi, pp. 673-680 (Dec. 16, 1922). For younger students W. G. Shepherd, "How Men Get into Politics," *American Boy*, vol. xxiv, p. 12 (Dec., 1922) will be found useful. The latter magazine is conducting an interesting campaign for "turning American boys and girls into politicians." The series by H. H. Curran on "John Citizen's Job" in the *Saturday Evening Post*, April 7, 21, May 26, June 30, and September 30, 1923, is also very helpful.

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soon become active party agents and ultimately the more able become leaders of greater or less power.

Start in your  
own pre-  
cinct

What advice may be offered to persons who wish to assume active political responsibilities? On this point the writer has consulted personally and by correspondence a large number of statesmen and politicians of various party affiliations, whose combined experience covers a wide range of activities, national, state, and local, in both public and party offices.<sup>1</sup> To a surprising extent these authorities agree in the advice they offer. On no point are they more unanimous than that the beginner must make a start in his own precinct, ward, or division. As Senator Hitchcock phrased it: "Like charity, politics should begin at home. . . . To succeed a man must begin with local questions in the precinct, the ward, the city, or the county. They are the natural stepping stones up to the questions in the larger fields of state and nation, and most men who have come into public life have come by that route. It may not interest a young man to go to meetings where the subjects of discussion are paving or grading or local taxation, but those are the questions that most men must naturally begin with." And the "best avenue of entrance," according to former Secretary Newton D. Baker, "is by association with a ward or other local organization of the political party or group most to his liking. He can there find a group sufficiently small to be within the range of his possible inti-

<sup>1</sup> Among the great number to whom the author is indebted in addition to those specifically quoted, it is a special pleasure to record the courtesy of the following, all of whom in spite of urgent business found time to write or talk at length in answer to questions on this subject: Simeon E. Baldwin, Connecticut; William W. Cocks, Sereno E. Payne, Arnold Petersen, Elihu Root, New York; Joseph L. Bristow, Kansas; Moses E. Clapp, Minnesota; Ford H. MacGregor, Wisconsin; Edward F. Dunne, James R. Mann, Illinois; John D. Works, California; Miles Poindexter, Washington; and the following from Pennsylvania—Warren Worth Bailey, Franklin S. Edmonds, Albert S. Faught, David H. Lane, William Draper Lewis, Francis S. McIlhenny, J. Hampton Moore, and Roland S. Morris. Valuable letters were received from the following representative women: Sophonisba P. Breckenridge, Julia C. Lathrop, Illinois; Carrie Chapman Catt, Katherine Bement Davis, New York; Maude Bassett Gorham, Massachusetts; Mary H. Ingham, Pennsylvania.



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mate personal acquaintance, and a forum in which whatever talents for political helpfulness and organization he has can be developed." Almost every letter received emphasized the necessity of making a local beginning. Thus Mrs. Antoinette Funk wrote: "The first observation of the workings of politics should be made in the home. That connects the young student directly with matters largely municipal, such as the schools, the roads, the pavements, the sewers, garbage disposal, the fire department, the police department, the health department, etc. It is a near step then to the study of questions submitted regarding these matters. Almost every boy and girl can frame a sound opinion whether or not new jails are needed, new bridges or public improvements of a general character."<sup>1</sup>

To begin locally, then, means to get into touch with the local committeeman or with certain local leaders. Perhaps a word of caution is needed here. A citizen may have chosen his national party with due deliberation and yet be completely ignorant of the character and purposes of its nearest local leaders. Since his association with the latter is bound to be close, it is essential to study them carefully. This is not to be done in any Pharisaical spirit, nor should too much credence be given to local gossip. Thus William Barnes of New York writes: "First I should unquestionably make the acquaintance of the election district and county organizations. Not of necessity that these organizations should be supported by the man in question, but that he should know about them first hand, and not through reputation created by opponents." As we have already learned, leadership in any district usually reflects the quality of the citizenship of that district. If the beginner finds the character and aims of the party's local leaders such that he can support them on the whole, he may offer them his co-operation. If, on the other hand,

Getting in  
touch with  
the local  
committee-  
man

<sup>1</sup>It will be observed that this is the point of view of the community civics now so largely taught in the schools of the country. For an admirable recent text-book on this subject see E. C. Levis, *Community Civics* (1923).

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he finds them unworthy of support he will do well to look up the leaders of the opposing faction. Certainly one must accept Roosevelt's dictum that "no man who is worth his salt has any right to abandon the effort to better our politics merely because he does not find it pleasant, merely because it entails associations which to him happen to be disagreeable."<sup>1</sup>

Formation  
of inde-  
pendent  
clubs if  
necessary

In certain districts it is possible that the citizen may find the local situation hopeless in that the leaders of both factions are pursuing aims which he feels bound to oppose. Let him then get out among his friends and organize a club of his own, aided by which he may become an independent political factor and, in time, perhaps, win the leadership himself. In any event, if he can succeed in rallying any considerable number of adherents to his banner he will find the older leaders inclined to treat with him for his support. On this point the late Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior under President Wilson, wrote: "I suggest that you tell your young friend to join the political club in his neighborhood. If there is no political club that fits his fancy, see if there are enough of his chums to form an organization. A political organization is just like a fraternal organization—men will rise in it who do the work for it and who show wisdom and tact. The best kind of political organization for a young man to join is one made up of all grades of people; the poorest kind of political organization is one made up of what the boys call 'highbrows.' I have never been a practical politician, but I think that if I were going into practical politics I would try to organize the workingmen, the street-car drivers, brakemen, firemen, and clerks and use them as a club to compel respectable nominations."

Beginners  
usually  
welcomed

It may happen that the services of beginners, especially if they seem too ambitious in their aims, will not be welcomed by the local leader or boss. The latter may fear that, once having gained experience and skill in party methods, the newcomers may turn out to be rivals or at least

<sup>1</sup> *American Ideals*, p. 48.

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have "to be taken care of." Professor Merriam tells a story of one local boss who was asked why he had discontinued the meetings of the ward club in his district. "Because," he said, "it is only a nursery for upstarts, and I have too many statesmen on my hands now."<sup>1</sup> In general, however, this attitude toward beginners is unusual. If a faction or party is in thorough control of a given territory, if, moreover, it is already oversupplied with active workers and with plentiful campaign funds, such an attitude may indeed be manifested. Thus T. Henry Walnut, at that time (1914) member of the state legislature from the seventeenth Philadelphia district, wrote: "It is much more difficult to break into a Republican organization as an active factor than it is into our independent organization. We are continually hunting for men who will take an interest, and any man who actually will work will find plenty to do, plenty of chances for the assumption of political responsibility." If on the other hand, the strength of the two parties is fairly evenly divided or if there is any threat of factional warfare, it might prove suicidal to refuse the proffered aid of newcomers. Also, as we have already noted, there is a virtually unlimited amount of party work to be done. Finally, most established political leaders or bosses have a robust, an even overweening, confidence in their ability to deal with "upstarts."

Once having made connection with his local organization, all the political authorities consulted agree that the newcomer in politics should with due modesty "begin at the bottom" and exhibit a willingness to undertake any kind of work for which he is fitted and which the interests of the party at the time may require. "It is quite simple and easy," writes Elihu Root, "for any intelligent young man to take part in the activities of a political party in the United States. He has only to select the party the ascendancy of which he considers most desirable, and let the recognized party officials of his own home know that he is willing to work. He will promptly find himself admitted

Newcomers must "begin at the bottom"

<sup>1</sup> *The American Party System*, p. 106.

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to membership in whatever may be the simplest form of political organization or association in the locality, and will find himself provided with plenty of work to do. It may be very far from the advocacy of principles and influence upon the policies and direction of government in which he would like to engage. He cannot begin by leadership or by dictating party policies, and he probably cannot assume in the beginning any such position of superiority as he may think his education and intelligence entitle him to have. The work in which he will be engaged at first may be simply the details of local organizations, which will perhaps seem of little consequence; or engaging in struggles between candidates for small offices, in which he does not take very much interest; or canvassing from house to house to ascertain the political affiliations or preference of the residents."<sup>1</sup>

Political  
work suit-  
able for be-  
ginners

There are many forms of political work suitable for beginners in addition to those mentioned by former Secretary Root. They range from addressing and stamping campaign literature, filing and card indexing, to "bell ringing," collecting campaign contributions, and "making stump speeches in the little red schoolhouse or on street corners." The beginner may gain experience to his advantage in any of these lines of work, but naturally he will prove most effective by testing out his aptitudes and devoting himself as soon as possible to the work for which he is best fitted. He may discover that he has capacity for independent leadership, readily attracting a following willing to accept his direction. Or without such capacity, he may possess the loyalty and industry needed in dependable assistants and trusted lieutenants. If he has a genius for organization, it is certain to be discovered and utilized in a political environment. If he is gifted as a writer he may best be employed as an author of campaign "literature" or in publicity work. Those who are looking forward to candidacy for office will naturally endeavor to secure such forms of

<sup>1</sup> *The Citizen's Part in Government*, p. 61.

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party work as will bring them most frequently and favorably to the notice of voters.

Some details regarding the work of a beginner in politics may prove helpful. "He should give much study to the election laws, a knowledge of which is absolutely essential. The question of getting out the full vote on registration days, at the primary election, and at the general election, becomes one of absorbing interest. He should be resourceful in knowledge of the right to challenge a vote when illegal, and, if he can, he ought to serve on the election board, or as watcher at the polls, to be present when the vote is counted."<sup>1</sup>

Learning to  
get out the  
vote

"If opportunity offers," writes Robert D. Dripps of Philadelphia, "the experience gained by a personal canvasser from house to house in the interest of the party of his choice is of profound value. It tests out a man's theories, sometimes in a rather trying way; it provides him with new political acquaintances; if his work is well done it commends him tremendously to the political leaders of the ward; it gives him a basis for conversation on political subjects of a very practical sort, and in general is, I think, of the first importance. . . . The beginner should also secure an introduction at the earliest possible date to the councilmen, representatives, state senators, and other office holders of the general character indicated, representing the section in which he lives. If he is willing to engage in stump speaking he should make the fact known, both to the ward leaders and to the office holders. Very often stump speaking can be better undertaken through assignment by a city or state committee to some locality other than that in which a man lives, for then if he makes a fool of himself in his early efforts he is not so apt to leave unpleasant memories behind in the district where he lives. Whether or not he engages in stump speaking, he should make it his business to attend political meetings and listen to the speeches there made, taking

Canvassing;  
stump  
speaking  
and other  
activities

<sup>1</sup> D. Lloyd Claycomb, formerly member of the Pennsylvania legislature from the first district of Blair County.



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particular pains to note the effect which they seem to have on the audience and taking notes, either then or later, of the points which seem especially impressive. . . . I also think such a man should be urged to keep in touch with several newspapers rather than with one only, and in particular he should read at least one paper representing the best thought of the leading party in opposition to his own."

### Ideals and principles

But what of devotion to ideals, loyalty to principles and policies, formal knowledge of the science of government as necessary to the equipment of the beginner in politics? It must be admitted that considerable difference of opinion exists among active political workers as to this question. On the one hand are those, chiefly of independent and progressive tendencies, who glorify ideals and principles. On the other hand those who have had long experience with the regular organizations are inclined to question the value of these factors, or to preach caution in their use, at least in the earlier stages of a political career.

### Advice of radical leaders

So important is this point that it may be well to quote at some length from the two types of advice offered. As illustrative of the first type Virgil Hinshaw, a well-known Prohibitionist leader, wrote: "First one should have at heart some great cause, the success of some issue vital to the nation's welfare. Whittier said: 'Young man, ally thyself in thy youth with some righteous, unpopular cause and live and work to make that cause popular.' . . . Second, one should go direct to the people for recognition. He need not court old politicians or statesmen who are now in office." And Walter Lanfersiek, a former Socialist party official, gave the following advice: "First of all, every young man should make a thorough study of the principles and policies of the various political parties. If he can assume the mental attitude of the student, who looks at or should look at every question with an impersonal eye, he will have a big advantage. . . . One would have to spend at least a year's assiduous study if he wants

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to master the socialist philosophy. . . . Our attitude is to examine carefully into social conditions and ascertain what *ought* to be done, regardless of the ignorance of the people and regardless of whether they want it or not. We believe that if they understood they would want immediately what we think is needed. . . . This attitude forces us to take a stand far in advance, a stand which is necessarily unpopular, but which in time will become popular, if it is right and in line with progress."

Contrast with the foregoing the following from a Pennsylvania Republican of independent affiliations: "It is naturally of paramount importance that a man should be thoroughly acquainted with the current literature not only of his own party, but of those with which it is in conflict. I question, however, whether the reading of elaborate treatises on political theory and the like is of the slightest use in the early stage of a man's political life. It seems to me that his efforts to obtain information as to the problems actually before the electorate would be better directed if he attempted to question the voters of his own division and the local political leaders and office holders of the same political faith as himself." <sup>1</sup> In a similar vein

Advice of  
old party  
leaders

<sup>1</sup> Robert D. Dripps of Philadelphia. The above quotation should be read in connection with the longer passage from the same letter quoted above, particularly the references in the former to canvassing. It would be possible to give from letters received a large number of similar pieces of advice. Thus former Governor William C. Sproul of Pennsylvania, himself a graduate of Swarthmore College, wrote: "The young man coming out of college should, as far as he is able to do so, get into intimate contact and association with the ordinary man. . . . He will get a better idea of the influences, good or bad, that are at work on the great bulk of the voters and will have a chance to talk *to* them instead of talking *at* them. The trouble with most college men whom I have seen in politics is that they have wanted to start to advise and lecture the voters from the platform and to mold public opinion without much knowledge of the material with which they are trying to work." Organization politicians do not hesitate to express the low esteem in which they hold "academic ideas" and "political science." Thus a former leader in the Pennsylvania Legislature writes: "It does not do for a young man to insist too strongly upon academic ideas that he may have absorbed from works on political science which differ largely from the views of persons of practical experience and which may be entirely at variance with the views of a majority of

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the late Senator Tillman of South Carolina wrote: "Political science is not less of the heart than of the head. Knowledge of government alone will not enable our young men to become public servants of the highest type; they must back up their knowledge with a sympathetic understanding of the conditions under which the average American citizen lives. They must get the viewpoint of the man farthest down; for, he, too, is a part of the Republic."

Principles  
and contact  
with people  
both needed

As a matter of fact, the difference of opinion, noted above, as to the value of information and ideals is more apparent than real, although there is a deep significance in the greater relative importance attached to these factors by radicals and progressives. Leaders of the latter type are much more ready to listen to philosophers, saints, and seers; nevertheless, they will be found teaching the necessity of organization and personal contact with the masses. Old party leaders, on the other hand, are willing to acknowledge the validity of revelations from persons of superior intelligence or moral insight, but they lay stress also on organization and on the necessity of listening to the voice of the people. Of course it is as easy as it is customary to satirize the latter attitude as "keeping one ear to the ground." There is, however, a certain democracy about this attitude; also it avoids the uncompromising austerity and intellectual snobbishness manifested by some of those who go to the other extreme. On many public questions the masses of the people speak directly from experience and with greater wisdom than the *intelligentsia*. Yet to ignore the conclusions of the latter on the complicated issues of modern government is to court disaster. In practical politics a working combination of these two elements must somehow be effected.

As a type of shrewd working compromise on this issue,

persons in the political district where he desires support. I believe that we all have abstract opinions for the general betterment of mankind, but the feasibility of the same is a matter that must be reckoned with and common sense must be applied in their expression."

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touched with a little Machiavellianism, the following from the former governor of a seaboard commonwealth may be quoted: "To be a leader among his acquaintances a man has to impress upon them that he possesses a willing ability to serve a little out of the common. This is done frequently by personal contact and personal interest, and by making public affairs the subject of conversation with his friends. He must be a good listener and ever ready to take everybody's advice. Should he desire to spread or extend his influence beyond his personal acquaintance, it becomes necessary that he identify himself with some idea of public government a bit unusual, and convince a certain number of people that that is what they want. The plausibility of the idea is more important than its soundness, and his ability to talk attractively about it and to get into the newspapers as being identified with it is more important than either."<sup>1</sup>

"Service a little out of the common"

Similarly, but less cynically, Roosevelt once referred to himself as a "great sounding board" for popular ideas, declaring that he "collected and reflected doctrines of the day."<sup>2</sup> A study of the great Progressive's career will illustrate at every turn the extreme ability with which he injected academic ideas into practical politics. "People used to say of me," he told one of his friends, "that I was an astonishingly good politician and divined what the people were going to think. This really was not an accurate way of stating the case. I did not 'divine' what the people were going to think; I simply made up my mind what they *ought* to think; and then I did my best to get them to think it. Sometimes I failed and then my critics said that 'my ambition had overleaped itself.' Sometimes I succeeded; and then they said that I was an uncommonly astute creature to have detected what the people were going to think and to pose as their leader in thinking it."<sup>3</sup> According to another of his biographers, Roosevelt

Roosevelt's methods

<sup>1</sup> Phillips Lee Goldborough, Maryland.

<sup>2</sup> C. E. Merriam, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> J. B. Bishop, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Time*, vol. ii, p. 414.



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said that at one period "he began to believe that he had a future, and that it behooved him to be farsighted and 'scan each action carefully with a view to its possible effect on that future.' 'This,' he adds, 'speedily made me useless to the public and an object of aversion to myself.' " <sup>1</sup>

Modesty  
insisted up-  
on for the  
beginner

On one point all advisers who touched upon it are agreed, namely that at the beginning of a political career the young man or woman should cultivate a becoming modesty. College graduates are particularly warned that no matter what they may have gained from contact with books and academic influences, they have lost something in the matter of contact with their fellows. Of course the tendency to look upon college graduates as "highbrows" or "silk stockings" differs with the locality. A good football record usually reduces it considerably. At the beginning of a political career college men may find themselves at a distinct disadvantage with the high-school or common-school lad who has remained a member of the "bunch" in the old home town. Of course in this respect politics is exactly like any other business or pursuit. Apprentices are not looked to for advice or leadership until they have learned the essential processes of the trade. Thus Senator Ralston of Indiana wrote: "Of course something may be gained in time by using a certain amount of tact and diplomacy in pushing to the front. The latter is a thing that can easily be overdone and a great deal of caution and finesse is required in self-boasting if a reaction is to be avoided. Many young men would make more permanent headway by a little more modesty, and by not 'crowding the mourners' too fast."

Other vir-  
tues as poli-  
ticians see  
them

While modesty is thus insisted upon as most becoming during one's apprenticeship, it is a virtue which finds few admirers in the subsequent stages of a political career. Candidacy, which is the next step, has little in common with the timid and shrinking violet. On the other hand, the political aspirant is abundantly exhorted to practice consistently many other virtues and to develop a number

<sup>1</sup> W. D. Lewis, *Life of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 59.



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of good qualities. In the aggregate these make an imposing list, although, of course, each writer mentioned two or three only. Among the praiseworthy qualities thus inculcated the largest number center about the cardinal virtues of truth and loyalty, as follows: candor, consistency, conscientiousness, fidelity, honesty, integrity, probity, sincerity, and earnestness.<sup>1</sup> Aggressiveness, courage, fearlessness, energy, initiative, punctuality, and perseverance are next in the number of their admirers—perseverance, by the way, being more frequently commended than any other single quality. Common sense, a sense of right and justice, a sure judgment, ability to sustain defeat with equanimity, and sympathy with the masses of the people are also praised. Conversely, dishonesty, iniquity, selfishness, and shiftiness are severely reprobated. Regarding personal conduct, Roosevelt sounded an important warning in his statement that “no man can lead a public career really worth leading, no man can act with rugged independence in serious crises, nor strike at great abuses, nor afford to make powerful and unscrupulous foes, if he is himself vulnerable in his private character.”<sup>2</sup>

To many readers, no doubt, this heaping mass of angelic advice, offered by successful to aspiring politicians, will smack of hypocrisy. Yet there is every internal evidence of sincerity on the part of those who offer it. It comes in almost equal measure from organization politicians and from independents or progressives. Curiously enough, the advice offered by women makes almost no mention of virtues and amiable qualities, being in that respect more matter-of-fact than the advice coming from men. There is a solid substratum of belief that the same qualities that

Sincerity of  
this advice

<sup>1</sup> On the last-mentioned point Senator Ralston of Indiana wrote: “Be yourself and be in earnest; take your politics seriously, not as a game. An honest, earnest man of industry and average ability will make a more permanent impression on public men and affairs than a brilliant man who plays politics as a game, and resorts to anything to win that will not put him in jail. Let citizenship be above partisanship, where there is a conflict.”

<sup>2</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 84.

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make for service and success in other pursuits make for service and success also in politics. After all, the question of sincerity resolves itself largely into one of standards. It is not abstract truth, courage, sympathy, and the like that are advocated, but these virtues in their relations to commonly accepted rules of conduct in various political circles.<sup>1</sup>

Political  
acquaint-  
ances

Certain other matters of conduct deserve special mention. "Every young man who aspires to politics must begin in the old way, and the first essential is acquaintance. The ability to recognize a great number of faces is not sufficient; he must be able to clap the right name to the right face, and that, too, without a moment's hesitation. Sometimes the faculty is a gift, but it may be immensely cultivated. . . . The prime asset, viewed from a purely practical standpoint, for any young man ambitious in the direction of politics, is the number of people whom he may greet by name, pleasantly and naturally."<sup>2</sup> Regarding the cultivation of this faculty, it is reported that some politicians keep a card-index record of all visitors, covering various facts regarding their appearance, qualities, residence, family and business connections, and political ambitions. Before a second meeting the private secretary places the record in the hands of the politician, who is thus able to demonstrate an apparently marvelous memory of and interest in the affairs of his visitor.

Joining  
various so-  
cial organi-  
zations

There is sharp difference of opinion regarding the propriety of joining various social organizations in the hope of gaining their support politically. Thus one writer

<sup>1</sup> Even in so highly reputable a body as the House of Commons a distinction is recognized between "truth" in the abstract and "government truth." Cf. C. F. G. Masterman, *How England Is Governed*, p. 221. On the other hand, the most practical of American politicians profess the highest standards of honor with regard to definite promises. The writer recalls but one exception to the latter rule, that of former Mayor Pingree of Detroit. "Thoroughly honest and trustworthy except when he was in a political contest, then . . . he never hesitated to promise the same place to more than one man." T. L. Johnson in his *My Story*, p. 96, refers to this trait among others as proving that Pingree was not a boss.

<sup>2</sup> R. K. Young, formerly state treasurer of Pennsylvania.

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naïvely advises: "As to affiliations with organizations other than those of a political character, that must be determined according to the strength and influence such organizations have in the community where the young politician is going to test his political strength. I know of no secret organization that will participate in a political contest as an organization, but in spite of that fact, being a member of such organizations has its silent influence. . . . Again, my last advice would be: 'Be sociable and courteous.' It will win more votes than money can secure." This writer blandly added an extended list of his own secret societies and clubs. On the other hand, the late Senator Tillman characteristically wrote: "No man should mix his social or religious life with his political activities. The man who joins a fraternal order or a church with an eye to its effect on his political ambitions is not fit to be the candidate of any decent party. The people, who, by the way, are not idiots, know this, and sooner or later will damn the 'social-religico statesman' as they ought to do."

In spite of Tillman's severe arraignment, a study of local politicians generally, not to speak of statesmen of higher rank, will reveal that, whatever their motives, they are affiliated with an unusually large number of fraternal, religious, business, and other social organizations. Commonly also they make generous contributions to and take a prominent part in the work of such bodies. While frequently noted in conversation, this practice is seldom condemned by the press or political opponents. Of course, no question is involved as to the entire propriety of joining those social organizations in which one has a real interest. But to affiliate with other organizations, as many as possible, merely for political effect—to become a "joiner," as the popular phrase has it—is clearly one of the many forms of "peanut politics." It is an evil which is more contemptible than menacing, but an evil none the less. From this point of view the following comment from Mrs. Frank M. Roessing of Pennsylvania is significant. "I realize that many men consider it an advantage to

Criticism  
of "joiners"

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belong to the Masons, Moose, Eagles, or Owls. My experience is that it is a wrong system and tends to create a network of indirect influence which is highly undesirable, as it tends to permit deeds of so-called philanthropy to involve a purely political question, and fosters a kind of personal loyalty which biases the judgment of men on issues which should be entirely impersonal."

Mannerisms  
and nick-  
names

Mannerisms, peculiarities of appearance or of attire, nicknames and affectionate sobriquets, unquestionably make up part of the stock in trade of many political leaders. To be called "Big Bill" instead of a stiff and formal "William"; to enjoy such an appellation as "Honest John," or even to be known as "Tubby"—is worth votes at the polls. Cannon's everlasting cigar rakishly uptilted from the side of his mouth, Taft's embonpoint and irrepressible chuckle, Roosevelt's teeth and eye-glasses, may serve as examples of unconscious mannerisms which served both to identify and popularize their owners. Of a somewhat different character are such "purposed affectations" as Disraeli's extraordinary taste in waistcoats.<sup>1</sup> Thus a former governor of New York was said to have "cultivated a resemblance" to Henry Clay. In the early nineties a Congressman managed to make himself instantly known at the capital by adopting for headgear an enormous beaver hat of the vintage of 1840. It is a fact worth observing, however, that not one of the American statesmen consulted regarding the career of the political aspirant made any reference to such adventitious means of attracting public attention. Perhaps they regarded all devices of the sort as picayunish. Certainly they are not commonly employed. Nevertheless, a recent successful candidate for the governorship of one of our

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Froude, *Lord Beaconsfield*, pp. 53, 70, says his dress "led the listener to look for only folly from him, and when a brilliant flash broke out it was the more startling as being so utterly unlooked for from such a figure. Perhaps he overacted his extravagance." On the occasion of his maiden speech in the House of Commons "his appearance was theatrical, as usual. He was dressed in a bottle-green frock coat, with a white waistcoat, collarless, and with needless display of gold chain."

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larger Eastern commonwealths, although formerly distinguished for his foppishness, thought it advisable to go through the campaign with unpressed trousers. Also his campaign photographs revealed him driving a Ford instead of his favorite high-powered car.

In its earlier stages the campaign for woman suffrage was doubtless retarded to a degree by the odd or freakish appearance of some of the advocates of that cause. "No woman in public life," wrote Anna Howard Shaw, "can afford to make herself conspicuous by any eccentricity of dress or appearance. If she does so she suffers for it herself, which may not disturb her, and to a greater or less degree she injures the cause she represents, which should disturb her very much."<sup>1</sup> In the later and more successful stage of the votes-for-women campaign anti-suffragists occasionally protested against the use of attractive and tastefully gowned women on the suffrage platform.

Women in  
public life

Having shown a willingness to learn and to work, the beginner in politics is urged to become a candidate for a minor elective office at the earliest possible opportunity.<sup>2</sup> Practical politicians generally advise the ambitious against seeking appointive offices. Thus the late Champ Clark wrote: "A young man who deliberately starts out to hold

Advice  
against seek-  
ing appoint-  
ive office

<sup>1</sup> *Story of a Pioneer*, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Senator Medill McCormick writes: "By all means let the collegian patriot consider himself a potential candidate for the minor offices of alderman, councilman, member of the legislature, where he will get the indisputable training, acquaintance, and experience which will make him secure in a higher position if he ever be elected to it." Along the same line James M. Cox, formerly governor of Ohio and Democratic candidate for the Presidency in 1920, advises the beginner in politics that "his ultimate aim should be to become a member of the state legislature. What we need most of all is a better class of legislators—men who will approach the processes of legislation with a truer perspective sense. Let him get and study *The Mechanics of Lawmaking* by Sir Courtenay Ilbert. If he cannot hope for membership in the state legislature he should at the very least seek to be a member of the city council. But above and beyond all things he should seek admission to the General Assembly and there have some practical experience in lawmaking. It is in this capacity that I see the greatest opportunity for political usefulness."



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

an appointive office ought to call in the assistance of an alienist and find out what is the matter with his head. . . . There is something exhilarating about being a candidate for an elective office, but nothing of the sort about being appointed to an office." From another source came the warning: "I cannot name a single instance where a political 'pull' amounted to two straws except perhaps to land one in a clerical position where his personality was obscured and where his real genius was never made known."<sup>1</sup> In this respect American political experience differs sharply from that of European countries, where private secretaries in the service of higher officials, often unsalaried, are recognized as stepping stones to a later independent political career.<sup>2</sup> The comparative unimportance of this development in the United States is probably due (1) to the larger number and greater powers of elective offices under our system of government; (2) to the great amount of patronage in the hands of our elective officials and the strenuous scramble among party workers for rewards of this character; and finally (3) to the relative dearth of young Americans of independent means who wish to make a career of politics.

Candidacy  
for minor  
elective  
offices

Admitting, then, the soundness of the advice that beginners in politics should contest at as early a date as possible for minor elective offices, it by no means follows

<sup>1</sup> Exception to this general condemnation of appointive office seeking should be made in cases where the appointee possesses unusual training and ability for the work and where the work itself brings the office holder into wide usefulness and prominence. Thus Taft's experience was apparently almost wholly, if not exclusively, appointive before his nomination for the Presidency. The careers of George B. Cortelyou and, more recently, of Herbert Hoover and Gifford Pinchot, illustrate this point. Apparently Mark Hanna's original conception of politics was to rise with the fortunes of some popular leader, first Foraker, then McKinley, but in spite of his brilliant success with the latter he found himself forced in the end to face the electorate of Ohio. Herbert Croly's comment on the latter decision, *Marcus Alonzo Hanna: His Life and Work*, chaps. xvii and xviii, is most illuminating. The reader is also referred to the admirable discussion of political leadership in C. E. Merriam's *American Party System*, chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> For a striking example, cf. E. M. Sait, *Government and Politics of France*, p. 108.

## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

that this will involve the abandonment on their part of business or professional pursuits or, in the case of women, of household duties.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, the type of offices normally open to beginners will require a part of their time only and may carry a nominal salary or none at all. They will be expected to content themselves at first with local party offices such as precinct or county committeeman, or with temporary public jobs as registration clerks, poll clerks, inspectors and judges of elections. Nomination may follow to the local school or health board or to the municipal council. While offices such as the foregoing offer little or no compensation, they do give the incumbent a valuable schooling in the elements of practical politics, a chance to enlarge his personal following, and, most important of all, an opportunity to be of real service to the public. They have the further advantage to a beginner that, without interrupting his breadwinning pursuit, he may test out his liking for public service and thus decide whether to seek more important and more engrossing offices or to confine his activities to the local sphere.

It is not at all uncommon for political leaders to suggest to their youthful adherents that the latter become candidates in what appear to be hopeless contests. This, of course, is a chronic state of affairs with minorities and, as a result of untoward circumstances, may occur at times in dominant party organizations. Nevertheless, full tickets have to be made up for every election, and the beginner who allows himself to be slated for a sound drubbing thereby performs a party service and acquires merit for which, possibly, he may receive reward later on. "It is never advisable," writes a former Congressman and Cabinet official, "for a young man to be overobtrusive, or overtimid. He should be always cautious about going into

Hopeless  
contests

<sup>1</sup> A recent inquiry shows that the women students of Swarthmore College were looking forward to public activities largely in offices requiring only part-time service—*e.g.*, reform-club and school-board activities, which would not interfere with home duties. Cf. M. Byrd, "Future Statesmen: The Political Ambitions of College Students," *Nat. Mun. Rev.*, vol. xi, pp. 313-316 (Oct., 1922).

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

political battles, but when he does go into them he should fight with all the ability he possesses."<sup>1</sup>

Candidacy  
as an aid  
to self-  
knowledge

If in accordance with the foregoing precept a young politician drafted for defeat nevertheless makes a hard, resourceful fight and develops greater strength than was anticipated, the defeat itself may turn out to be a feather in his cap.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he may find even a losing battle "exhilarating," as one seasoned politician quoted above expressed it. There is nothing like candidacy to bring out the stark realities of politics. A timid soul may shrink from them, but a courageous soul will rejoice to feel out the strength and the tactics of the opposition. Finally, there is nothing like candidacy to develop knowledge of human nature. The poet need not have implored divine aid "to see ourselves as others see us." One experience as candidate would have supplied him with an exhaustive catalogue of his virtues and vices, both somewhat magnified, as observed by his fellow citizens. In addition he would have learned that some of his most trusted friendships were valueless at least politically, and, on the other hand, that he possessed many hitherto unappreciated but warm well-wishers.

Attainment  
of financial  
or profes-  
sional stand-  
ing before  
entering  
politics as a  
career

Once through with the labors and trials of apprenticeship, the political aspirant must face the problem of candidacy for higher political offices, in short of politics as a career. Can he afford to do so before he has attained financial independence or made for himself an established position in the business or professional world?<sup>3</sup> The risks

<sup>1</sup> William B. Wilson of Pennsylvania. "A pretty good maxim," according to J. E. Davies of Wisconsin, "is, 'Don't fight unless you fight hard.' A losing fight, if fought hard, is frequently an asset."

<sup>2</sup> "It may be necessary at times for a young man in politics to reach into his own pocket to defray expenses in a hopeless campaign, or in aid of other candidates, and this self-sacrifice is always observed by political leaders who are constantly on the watch for men who will make strong candidates." From R. S. Spangler of Pennsylvania.

<sup>3</sup> A young man of independent income has an advantage over other young men less favorably situated economically in that he may enter practical politics at an earlier age. In the United States, however, few young men of the former type are interested in public affairs. Those who do

## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

are moral as well as economic. "If a young man becomes engrossed in politics before at least establishing the basis of a competence and enters the public service, he becomes so dependent upon his public income that only the hardest of the very strong escapes falling prey to one of two evils—either the use of his office for private gain or the destruction of his independence among his constituents. Therefore, before engaging in politics to the absorption of much of his time, a young man should be firmly grounded against the pressure of ordinary living necessities. In the long reach, this independence will make his career more valuable than it would be under the other alternative. A young man should seek to establish political affiliations with forward-going and high-minded organizations. The instant temptation everywhere is to seek the temporary advantage first offered, and the unfortunate thing is that the advantage is usually offered to promising pioneers in political work by organizations which control prizes of material value. These prizes are always possessed by party organizations representing special interests. This fact is a truth in the very nature of things, because parties representing the mass of the comparatively unpropertied public have no resources of money or material value. One of the tragic and pathetic things in practical politics

have such an interest may find it hard to overcome the class prejudices of their own friends and, still more difficult, to secure the confidence of their associates in poorer walks of life. Roosevelt's career illustrates these points admirably. He was only twenty-three at the time of his election to the lower house of the New York state legislature. "He had been left by his father sufficient means to permit him to make the earning of additional money a secondary matter. He said in after life that it was the possession of this inheritance which enabled him to accept offices at a salary inadequate for the support of himself and his family, and through which he secured advancement in public life." When, shortly after his graduation from Harvard, Roosevelt announced his intention of joining the Republican political club in his district, his friends ridiculed him, saying that "the men in control of city politics were not gentlemen, but saloon keepers, street-car conductors, and the like." Roosevelt replied that "if this were so it merely meant that the people I knew did not belong to the governing class, and that the other people did—and that I intended to be one of the governing class." See T. Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, pp. 62, 63; J. B. Bishop, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Time*, vol. i, p. 6.

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is the seduction of young, virile, and useful men by temptations of this character."<sup>1</sup> While this advice is undeniably good, it is worth repeating that there are a large number of local and party offices which do not require much time or involve absence from one's regular business, and in which citizens of high character and public spirit may serve usefully without comprising their freedom of action.

Law as a  
stepping  
stone to  
politics

The law is frequently mentioned as a profession transition from which to a political career involves a maximum of opportunity and minimum of disadvantage. There are many reasons for this view. The education of lawyers fits them for a large variety of public offices in which persons without legal training would be incompetent or at least relatively inefficient. The highly legalistic character of our government makes this true to a greater degree than in any other country. That the public recognizes the fact is shown by the extremely large percentage of lawyers elected even to those public offices where legal training is not requisite. A lawyer's practice establishes connections of interest with clients in many walks of life.<sup>2</sup> From them he may learn much of the public needs; among them he may recruit a devoted following. Moreover, a lawyer is not tied to his desk as continuously as other professional or business men. Returning from a term in the legislature or in Congress, he may pick up the threads of his practice where he left them, and may even find that his reputation has been enhanced by his public service.

Courses  
open to law-  
yers in poli-  
tics

Nevertheless, a number of keen observers repeat the warning in one form or another that "it is a great mistake for a young lawyer to embark on a political career before he has established himself in the confidence of the com-

<sup>1</sup> H. F. Cochems of Wisconsin. On such pitiable wrecks of character see Brand Whitlock, *Forty Years of It*, p. 328.

<sup>2</sup> Of course in these days of specialization this is no longer so true as it was in the period of the general practitioner. H. Croly holds that "the qualifications of the American lawyer for his traditional task as the official interpreter and guide of American constitutional democracy has been considerably impaired. For a trenchant discussion of this point see his *Promise of American Life*, pp. 131-137.



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munity as a hard-working, close, and intelligent student of the law.”<sup>1</sup> The warning is well founded, for it is by no means so easy to step from a legal to a political career or to combine the two as the general public is inclined to believe. The young attorney beginning practice may choose one of three courses. First, he may stand entirely aloof from party connections, devoting himself single-mindedly to his profession. Most of the older practitioners will advise him that by so doing he will facilitate his success at the bar. Second, he may enter politics for “what there is in it,” allying himself more or less openly with the machine. Men of ability often find this course very profitable. There are many refereeships, masterships, guardianships, commissionerships, and other appointments which go to politically “deserving” members of the bar, bringing in fat fees, but still leaving them free to carry on their private practice. Lawyers of this type also find it easy to secure various court favors or personal accommodations from judges, such as postponement of cases, signing documents late at night, and the like. It need not be inferred that all this involves anything more than customary favoritism; indeed, the shrewd political lawyer knows perfectly well how to avoid risks of a corrupt character. Finally, the machine he serves may nominate and elect him to certain public posts of honor and profit—important city offices, membership in the legislature, or in Congress, for example. But if he aspires to offices of higher type his record of subserviency, which cannot be entirely concealed, will prove more and more of a handicap. Even if it does not prevent his election or appointment it will seriously cripple his capacity for public service of the highest type.

Thirdly, let us consider the case of the lawyer who enters politics with high ideals of public service. Many of the best-paying clients will avoid him, believing that, owing to his political activities, he must neglect his practice. While the latter suspicion may be unfounded, it is

**The lawyer  
who is inde-  
pendent in  
politics**

<sup>1</sup> The words quoted are from J. E. Davies of Wisconsin.

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certain that his political responsibilities will prove a heavy burden upon his time and energies. Other clients will fear that since he is fighting the machine he must be "in bad" with the courts. Certainly the lawyer of independent or progressive political connections cannot hope to receive favors such as were referred to above as belonging among the perquisites of the subservient practitioner. Finally, the lawyer in politics is apt to find many of his poorer constituents coming to him for legal advice or help. If he becomes a candidate their gratitude may be useful to him, but from the financial point of view they are apt to prove either poor pay or mere charity clients.<sup>1</sup>

Obstacles in  
other pro-  
fessions

It has been thought worth while to present in some detail the obstacles to political activity of an independent or progressive character on the part of lawyers. If these obstacles are so serious in the case of that profession which, by common consent, provides the best stepping stone to political advancement, it can be imagined how much more serious are the obstacles to political activity on the part of men engaged in other professions, in business, or in salaried positions.

Difficulties  
to be met  
by women

Women of public spirit also have formidable difficulties to overcome. As beginners in politics and but recently enfranchised, they must gain experience in much the same way as men, except that the field is new and for that reason harder to cultivate. Many of them enjoy sufficient leisure to undertake political duties, but social barriers and prejudices are often in the way. Housewives whose children are grown and no longer need their care are seemingly exempt from many of the political temptations and repressions which stand in the way of men. If they should succeed in developing strength as independent or progressive leaders it can be accepted as a certainty, however, that machine influences will seek to control them. Considering all these obstacles, the dearth of competent

<sup>1</sup> For this discussion of the various courses open to the lawyer beginning a political career the writer is indebted to Mr. Samuel B. Scott of the Philadelphia bar.

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and fearless leadership in contemporary politics is not hard to understand.

It is futile to exhort citizens to undertake political activity of a more than ordinarily energetic character unless a sufficient motive for such activity can be supplied. To the most ambitious, perhaps, power and popularity are their own reward. They may emulate the example of one who

Appeal of  
politics to  
the ambi-  
tious and  
gifted

“ . . . lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's degrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The center of a world's desire.”

The poet, it should be noted, reserves this exalted destiny for “some divinely gifted man.” In our own time and country not more than two men perhaps, may be said to have possessed political genius, yet to each of them fate brought triumph and disaster in almost equal measure. Even for the most gifted, therefore, “the political road is not a royal one. Much of what is often called success is in reality failure or, at least, not worth the effort it costs.”<sup>1</sup> Success bought at the expense of character or by the sacrifice of the best interests of the public belongs to this category. On the other hand, it is difficult to conceive a more full and blessed human life than that of the man of great gifts called to supreme power at a time of crisis and enabled to use his personal talents and official powers for the higher welfare of his people or of all mankind. In Lincoln by common consent we recognize the greatest American. Noble as was his character, splendid as was his capacity for service, still it was through the political career alone that he could have reached this sublime eminence.

<sup>1</sup> Henry Houck, formerly secretary of the Department of Internal Affairs, Pennsylvania.

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The lesser  
prizes of  
politics

Only to the most exceptional individuals, then, does politics yield its highest rewards, accompanying them often by the most merciless bludgeonings of fate. For the common run of public-spirited men and women, who after all must shoulder the daily burdens of democracy, such dazzling prizes are out of the question. On the other hand, politics offers in full measure lesser offices of honor and profit and innumerable opportunities for service suited to every type and grade of ability. So varied and easily accessible are these minor possibilities that anyone who devotes himself earnestly to politics may be sure that "he will ultimately find the exact level and rise to the full height of opportunity and influence and dignity of employment to which his abilities, character, and devotion to his duties entitle him. If he is able and willing to render effective service, he will gradually find himself moving along until he is at last engaged in the most important duties in the broadest fields of political action. In the meantime, or if he should never rise above mere local activity, let him remember that the first and chief duty of citizenship is to serve in the ranks—not to await some great and glorious occasion to win fame and power."<sup>1</sup>

Joy of combat—and its  
bitter-  
nesses

To all its votaries—leaders, lieutenants or privates—politics brings occasional vivid moments, something of the joy of combat in constantly recurring campaigns. With all its delightful banter there is an element of truth in Zangwill's comment: "No, the fight's the thing! War, if not dead, is banished from our shores; the duello has been laughed to death; cock fighting and bull baiting have ceased to charm: politics alone remains to gratify the pugnacity and cruelty that civilization has robbed of their due objects."<sup>2</sup> Of course there is much less of this sort of thing now than in the days when "Blues and Reds meant broken heads." And there is immensely more of humdrum organization work, of ceaseless "schemin' and

<sup>1</sup> Elihu Root, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> I. Zangwill, *Without Prejudice*, essay vi, "Concerning General Elections," p. 82.

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contrivin'." Politics nowadays demands persistent attention to innumerable wearisome details, it involves an immense amount of hard, dull drudgery. In these respects, of course, it differs not at all from the other serious professions and occupations of mankind. To a greater degree than most of them, however, politics involves uncertainty, the alternation of success and failure, the necessity of compromise and adjustment or even of the abandonment of cherished purposes. Also it involves more of misrepresentation, misunderstanding, personal bitterness, and public fickleness.<sup>1</sup> Not without reason has the ingratitude of republics become a proverb. All the more honor, therefore, to those of stout hearts and tough fiber who carry on undaunted to the end.

Quite apart from rewards in the form of public office, political activity may be made to serve material ends which need not be at variance with, but may, indeed, contribute to the welfare of the community. In the increasing specialization of American life it has been too readily assumed that the individual should devote himself exclusively to his own profession or business, and particularly that he should shun politics. As a matter of fact, government is a silent partner in every business. This truth becomes increasingly evident with every addition to the tax burden, with every new policy of state regulation.

Under the stress of these developments a business or profession which keeps entirely out of the field of politics is likely to be forced in the protection of its own interests to resort for assistance to those who are not so squeamish, namely to machine politicians. The latter, it may be

Material  
ends of po-  
litical ac-  
tivity

Business  
and politics

<sup>1</sup> Thus Brand Whitlock, *Forty Years of It*, p. 350, writes of his experience as mayor: "The truth is that long before the eight years were over the irritation of constant, persistent, nagging criticism had got on my nerves, and besides the pain of misunderstanding and misrepresentation, I grew to have a perfect detestation for those manipulations which are the technic of politics." James M. Cox, formerly governor of Ohio and Democratic candidate for the Presidency in 1920, wrote: "Warn the young man beginning a political career that no matter how disinterested he may be, his motives will be suspected and for his reward he will be made a target for abuse and vilification."



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assumed, will exact heavy returns for their services, whether legitimate or illegitimate; neither is the intelligence or loyalty of such servants to be reckoned on. Fortunately, for legitimate business there is another alternative. It may organize to protect its own public interests—for example, by circulating petitions, issuing public statements, drafting suitable legislation, sending deputations to make pleas before legislative committees, and the like. A consideration of the list of organizations of this character mentioned above will show that the latter practice is now commonly employed not only by business and professional men, but by farmers and laborers as well. In such organizations the member who has a practical knowledge of government and politics as well as of his own immediate concerns is manifestly in a position to do more for his profession or occupation than the man who keeps his nose everlastingly on the economic grindstone. In an even broader way a business man who has a sense of public obligation may help to build up his own and the general business interests of the locality by working for the improvement of his community through the City Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Home and School Association, or on unpaid civic boards. If, in addition, he will take such share as his time and talents permit in actual party work his general influence will be greatly strengthened. For example, without expressing any judgment as to what extent public interests are furthered thereby, the enormous political effectiveness of the Manufacturers' Association of Pennsylvania in securing legislative consideration is undoubtedly due in no small degree to the prominence one of its officers has attained in the organization of the dominant political party of the state.

The measure of our dependence upon politics

How shallow is the conventional sneer at "politics" as if it were some loathsome disease, when one reflects that we depend largely upon government for such varied goods as the supply of public utilities, housing inspection, sanitation, the education of our children, protection of property and reputation, workmen's compensation, factory inspection,

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the suppression of vice and crime, civil law, the regulation of great industrial and commercial combinations, the fateful decision between war and peace. Yet these are but a few items in the ever-lengthening list of public functions. In the last analysis all these functions of government will be exercised well or poorly accordingly as citizens perform well or poorly the political duties intrusted to them.

It is not so much in the material, but in the moral and social field, that the real obligations and rewards of political activity must be sought. There are certain universals in life—among them religion, the family, economic self-support, and political duty—which may be neglected, it is true, but only at the cost of losing something of the fullest possible life, of a perceptible crippling of character. In spite of the poet's eloquent attempt at vindication Ibsen's peasant who cut off a finger to avoid military service was mutilated not only physically, but morally. "Both for church and state a fruitless tree—

Politics,  
morals and  
society

Out beyond the circle  
Of those most near to him he nothing saw.  
To him seemed meaningless as cymbals tinkling  
Those words that to the heart should ring like steel.  
His race, his fatherland, all things high and shining  
Stood ever to his vision, veiled in mist."<sup>1</sup>

No doubt politics in some of its phases exerts an unwholesome effect upon certain types of character, but only those enfeebled by moral lassitude or cowardice will avoid it on that account. On the other hand, politics broadens life immensely by lifting us at times out of our more immediate personal and social concerns in order that we may know and perform our duties in the higher spheres of the community, of the nation, even of international affairs. With a measure of his habitual irony Disraeli "once told an aspirant for high office that as for its pleasures, they

Politics  
and character

<sup>1</sup> There is a passionate note of sincerity in this passage (*Peer Gynt*, act v, sc. iii, translation by W. and C. Archer, p. 216) which marks it not simply as a defense of the deed, but as self-defense of the poet's character, notoriously insensible to national feeling.

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lay chiefly in contrasting the knowledge it afforded of what was really being done with the ridiculous chatter about affairs in the circles that one frequented."<sup>1</sup> The remark need not be limited to high offices, however. Many a town councilman or school director has smiled over a similar reflection, pondering gravely at the same time upon the necessity of educating his constituents in order that public business might be carried on satisfactorily. To feel oneself, however humble, "still a member of the ruling class," as Roosevelt put it, to understand at first hand something of the life of one's time at its most vital point, namely where interests clash for the control of power, certainly this is more fascinating than all the imaginings of fiction or the drama.

Politics  
free from  
snobbery

Activity in political affairs contributes not only to breadth of view as against narrow and petty absorptions, but also aids in the cultivation of certain minor but none the less desirable personal qualities. With growth of wealth and increase of specialization American society has developed a considerable degree of class segregation naturally accompanied by some manifestations of snobbishness. Now there is one atmosphere in which traits of the latter character cannot live for an instant—that of democratic politics. Understanding of and sympathy with the life of other classes are not common in our so-called better circles, but they are a part of the equipment of every political worker. With these traits there is developed also a habit of helpfulness, partly self-interested, no doubt, but still the reverse of all that is aloof and disdainful. No one who has attained even the slightest local prominence in politics can fail to be touched by the numerous appeals that will be made to him for aid in securing naturalization papers, in registering for primaries and elections, in deciding how to vote, or, for that matter, in obtaining employment or charitable relief, and in all the thousand and one exigencies of the neighborly life about him.

Impressed by the eighteenth-century hatred of tyranny,

<sup>1</sup> W. Sichel, *Disraeli*, p. 33.

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the fathers of our institutions laid stress naturally upon the "rights of citizens." Wise men know that duties are the necessary correlatives of rights, but to the unthinking this principle is not so clear. It is to be regretted, therefore, that political duties are left unexpressed in our fundamental law and hence must be derived, if at all, by implication or from pure moral sources. In the more recent constitutions of Europe it is significant that duties are formulated side by side with rights.<sup>1</sup> Recently an American writer has endeavored to set down his conception of some of the duties of the citizen in a free land, among them the duty "to look upon the privilege of the suffrage as a sacred thing and to use it as becometh a sovereign prerogative; to bear his portion of the common burdens cheerfully; to serve in public office at personal sacrifice; and to regard it as a public trust."<sup>2</sup> To serve in public office, as we have seen, nearly always involves service in party office, or at least the taking of a more than ordinarily active part in the work of political organizations.

Duties of  
citizens

Mindful not only of its highest purposes, but also of its historic continuity, Burke sublimely visioned the state as "a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead and those who are to be born." It is in this last conception that one finds the most impressive motive for political interest and activity. Members of the privileged classes in a monarchy or an aristocracy seldom fail to realize the value of their political inheritance or the desirability of transmitting it unimpaired to their descendants. Citizens of democratic states have

Our greater  
heritage

<sup>1</sup> See *The Constitution of the German Commonwealth*, translated by W. B. Munro and A. N. Holcombe, World Peace Foundation, vol. ii, no. 6 (Dec., 1919); another translation is to be found in H. L. McBain and L. Rogers, *The New Constitutions of Europe*, pp. 167-212. Cf. also the author's *Government and Politics of Switzerland*, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> W. B. Munro, *Government of the United States*, p. 87.

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been no less keen so far as the inheritance of private property is concerned. Much less often, however, do they think in analogous terms of that greater estate which they hold not severally, but in common from the fathers who founded their government and from the intervening generations of statesmen and citizens who builded it up. To us, now, the task of continuing their work, realizing that if democracy is to survive in virtue and power it must be not the work of one or of a few, but of many.

### BOOK NOTES

IN addition to the more specific reform organizations which have been mentioned in earlier chapters students should make a study of the literature issued by the National Municipal League both in pamphlet form and through the medium of its organ, the *National Municipal Review*. The latter discusses questions of county and state government as well as municipal affairs. While it is the organ of the National Municipal League, it also serves the American Civic Association, the City Managers' Association, and the National City Planning Conference. The offices of the National Municipal League are at 261 Broadway, New York city.

Women students should be urged to study at first hand the work of the nearest local branches of the National League of Women Voters, with a view to affiliating therewith. This organization maintains central headquarters at 532 Seventeenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., also various regional and state headquarters throughout the country. It carries on important educational work in the political field and utilizes as its organ part of the space of the weekly *Woman Citizen*, published at 171 Madison Avenue, New York city.

Although antedating the adoption of the suffrage amendment, W. H. Allen, *Woman's Part in the Government* (1911), contains many valuable suggestions for women who wish to take an active part in the affairs of citizenship. Mrs. Mary R. Beard, *Woman's Work in*



## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

*Municipalities* (1915), presents a summary of the work that the women of America have done to rescue the city from the powers of evil and inefficiency and to place it upon a higher standard of morality and effectiveness. Practical advice based upon English conditions is given in J. M. E. Brownlow, *Woman's Work in Local Government* (1911). *Your Vote and How to Use It*, by Mrs. Raymond Brown and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt (1918), deals with the subject of civics from the standpoint of the woman who votes.

In the field of local government the best recent work is \*K. H. Porter, *County and Township Government in the United States* (1922). Readers will find Ch. XV of this book especially helpful on the reform of county government. There are a few earlier studies in this field which may be consulted with profit, viz., H. S. Gilbertson, *The County, the "Dark Continent" of American Politics* (1917); and C. C. Maxey, *County Administration* (1919), the latter being based upon an intensive survey of county government in Delaware. Both of these works are critical in character and emphasize the need of reform. J. A. Fairlie, *Local Government in Counties, Towns, and Villages* (1906); and H. G. James, *Local Government in the United States* (1906) are valuable works, descriptive in character.

W. B. Munro, whose earlier works on municipal government in the United States and Europe have been cited frequently in these pages, has just brought out an extended treatise on *Municipal Government and Administration* (2 vols., 1923). The student should also consult F. J. Goodnow and F. G. Bates, *Municipal Government* (1919). E. Kimball combines the discussion of two important fields in his *State and Municipal Government in the United States* (1922).

On state government proper the most valuable recent works are A. N. Holcombe, *State Government in the United States* (1916); J. M. Mathews, *Principles of American State Administration* (1917); and W. F. Dodd,

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

*State Government* (1922). As examples of intensive monographic studies in this field along Bureau of Municipal Research lines, the following may be mentioned: *The Constitution and Government of the State of New York* (Bulletin 61, 1915); *State Administration, Proposed Amendments for the Reorganization of the Executive Branch before the New York Constitutional Convention* (Bulletin 63, 1915); and *Budget Systems* (Bulletin 62, 1915)—all issued by the Bureau of Municipal Research, 261 Broadway, New York city.

Of making many books on the federal government there is no end. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (new ed. rev. to 1910), remains the great classic in this field, in connection with which his chapters on the United States (XXXVIII to XLV, Vol. II) of his *Modern Democracies* (1921), should be read. There are several excellent textbooks of later date by American writers, all of which offer constructive suggestions upon the framework and functioning of the national government. Of exceptional merit are F. A. Ogg and P. O. Ray, *Introduction to American Government* (1922); W. B. Munro, *Government of the United States* (1919); E. Kimball, *The National Government of the United States* (1919); J. T. Young, *The New American Government and Its Work* (1915); and C. A. Beard, *American Government and Politics* (1910).

Moral exhortations on the performance of civic duty are fairly numerous, the best recent examples being A. T. Hadley, *Standards of Public Morality* (1907); Elihu Root, *The Citizen's Part in Government* (1907); W. H. Taft, *Four Aspects of Civic Duty* (1907); and H. C. Emery, *Politician, Party, and People* (1913). Direct practical advice on the making of political connections, on the other hand, is comparatively rare in published form. Recently, however, a new interest has been manifested in this subject, chiefly in the form of articles in periodicals which have been cited as fully as possible in footnotes to the preceding chapter.

APPENDIX

PLATFORMS OF THE MAJOR PARTIES  
IN 1924

TOGETHER WITH THE INDEPENDENT  
LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

PRESENTED IN PARALLEL COLUMNS AC-  
CORDING TO A LOGICAL ARRANGEMENT  
OF SUBJECT MATTER



## THE NATIONAL CONVENTIONS OF 1924

THE eighteenth Republican National Convention was held in Convention Hall, Cleveland, Ohio, June 10 to 12, 1924. The whole number of votes represented was 1,109, a majority (or 555) being needed to nominate. There were 397 women delegates and alternates in the convention. A nomination for the presidency was made on the first ballot, taken June 12th, the vote being as follows: Calvin Coolidge of Massachusetts, 1,065; Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin, 34; Hiram Johnson of California, 10. For the vice-presidency three ballots were taken, Frank O. Lowden of Illinois being nominated on the second with 779 votes. Upon receipt of his refusal to accept, a third ballot resulted in the success of Charles G. Dawes of Illinois with 682½ votes. The platform was adopted without change as reported by the Resolutions Committee on June 11th, after a substitute platform offered by the adherents of La Follette had been rejected overwhelmingly by the convention. The text of the platform reprinted in the following pages is from an official copy issued by the Republican National Committee.

The Democratic National Convention of 1924 began its sessions June 24th, in Madison Square Garden, New York City. The whole number of votes represented was 1,098; necessary to a choice under the two-thirds rule, 732. Of the delegates and alternates to the Democratic convention 474 were women. Sixteen names were formally presented for the presidential nomination. In the ensuing deadlock all records were broken and it was not until the 103d ballot taken on July 9th, that a decision was reached in favor of John W. Davis by 838½ votes. In the ensuing and final session which continued until the early morning of July 10th, C. W. Bryan of Nebraska was nominated on the first ballot for the vice-presidency with 739 votes. After a heated debate on the floor of the convention over minority planks dealing with the League of Nations and the Ku Klux Klan, the platform was adopted without change as reported by the Resolutions Committee at the second session beginning June 28th. Owing to the inability of the writer to procure an official copy of the Democratic platform, the version which appeared



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

in the *New York Times* of June 29th is used in the parallel arrangement below.

As noted above, a substitute platform offered by the adherents of La Follette was overwhelmingly voted down at the Republican convention on June 11th. On July 4th a Conference for Progressive Political Action, attended by more than a thousand delegates representing Farmer-Labor, Nonpartisan League, and Socialist groups, the railway brotherhoods, labor unions, farmers' organizations, the Woman's Committee for Political Action and other bodies, met in Cleveland, nominated La Follette by acclamation for the presidency the day following, and authorized the National Committee of the Conference acting with the La Follette for President Committee to name the candidate for the vice-presidency. Two weeks later this nomination was offered to and accepted by Burton K. Wheeler of Montana. For purposes of comparison the planks of the platform adopted by the Conference for Progressive Political Action at Cleveland have been inserted beneath the corresponding planks of the two old party platforms in the following parallel column arrangement. In numerous instances the planks of the Conference platform are less vigorous and detailed than those of the substitute platform offered earlier by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention. To complete the presentation of the La Follette policies the latter have been quoted freely in footnotes. For use in this way the writer is indebted to Senator La Follette for an official copy of the substitute platform offered at the Republican convention. In the absence of an official copy the platform of the Conference for Progressive Political Action is quoted from the *New York Times* of July 6th. On July 7th, the National Convention of the Socialist party in session at Cleveland indorsed the La Follette candidacy and platform by a vote of 106 to 17.

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Official returns, given to the press December 23, 1924, show that the popular vote in the presidential election of that year was as follows: Coolidge, 15,718,789; Davis, 8,378,962; and La Follette, 4,822,319. The vote of the various minor parties was not reported. La Follette carried one state only, Wisconsin, with 13 electoral votes; Davis, twelve states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia), with 136 electoral votes; and Coolidge the remaining states with 382 electoral votes.

# PLATFORMS OF 1924

## INTRODUCTION

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The delegates of the Republican party, in national convention assembled, bow our heads in reverent memory of Warren G. Harding. We nominated him four years ago to be our candidate; the people of the nation elected him their President. His human qualities gripped the affections of the American people. He was a public servant, unswerving in his devotion to duty. A stanch Republican, he was first of all a true patriot who gave unstintingly of himself during a critical period of our national life. His conception and successful direction of the Limitation of Armament Conference in Washington was an achievement which measurably advanced the world along the path toward peace.

As representatives of the Republican party, we share in the national thanksgiving that in the great emergency created by the death of President Harding there stood forth fully equipped to be his successor one whom we had nominated as Vice President—Calvin Coolidge. As Vice President and President, by word and deed, he has justified the faith and confidence which inspired his selection. He has put the public welfare ahead of all other considerations. He has given to the people practical idealism in office. In his every act he has won, without seeking,

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We, the representatives of the Democratic party, in national convention assembled, pay our profound homage to the memory of Woodrow Wilson. Our hearts are filled with gratitude that American democracy should have produced this man, whose spirit and influence will live on through the ages; and that it was our privilege to have co-operated with him in the advancement of ideals of government which will serve as an example and inspiration for this and future generations. We affirm our abiding faith in those ideals, and pledge ourselves to take up the standard which he bore and to strive for the full triumph of the principles of democracy to which he dedicated his life.

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

the applause of the people. The constantly accumulating evidence of his integrity, vision and single-minded devotion to the needs of the people of this nation strengthens and inspires our confident faith in his continued leadership.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

For one hundred and forty-eight years the American people have been seeking to establish a government for the service of all and to prevent the establishment of a government for the mastery of the few. Free men of every generation must combat renewed efforts of organized force and greed to destroy liberty. Every generation must wage a new war for freedom against new forces that seek through new devices to enslave mankind. Under our representative democracy the people protect their liberties through their public agents. The test of public officials and public policies alike must be: Will they serve, or will they exploit, the common need?

The reactionary continues to put his faith in mastery for the solution of all problems. He seeks to have what he calls the "strong men and best minds" rule and impose their decision upon the masses of their weaker brethren. The progressive, on the contrary, contends for less autocracy and more democracy in government, and for less power of privilege and greater obligation of service. Under the principle of ruthless individualism and competition, that government is deemed best which offers to the few the greatest chance of individual gain. Under the progressive principle of co-operation, that government is deemed best which offers to the many the highest level of average happiness and well-being. It is our faith that we all go up or down together—that class gains are temporary delusions and that eternal laws of compensation make every man his brother's keeper. In that faith we present our program of public service.

### PARTY RECORDS AND ISSUES<sup>1</sup>

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

When the Republican administration took control of the government in 1921 there were four and a half million unemployed, industry and commerce were stagnant, agriculture was prostrate, business was depressed, the bonds of the government were selling below their par value. Peace was delayed, misunderstanding and fric-

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We urge the American people to compare the record of eight unsullied years of Democratic administration with that of the Republican administration. In the former there was no corruption. Party pledges were faithfully fulfilled and a Democratic Congress enacted an extraordinary number of constructive and remedial laws.

<sup>1</sup> See also Corruption in Government, below.

## APPENDIX

tion characterized our relations abroad. There was a lack of faith in the administration of government resulting in a growing feeling of distrust in the very principles upon which our institutions are founded.

To-day industry and commerce are active; public and private credits are sound. We have made peace; we have taken the first step toward disarmament, and strengthened our friendship with other powers. Our relations with the rest of the world are on a firmer basis, our position was never better understood, our foreign policy never more definite and consistent. The tasks to which we have put our hands are not completed. Time has been too short for the correction of all the ills we received as a heritage from the last Democratic administration, but the notable accomplishments under Republican rule warrant us in appealing to the country with entire confidence.

The economic life of the nation was quickened. Tariff taxes were reduced. A Federal Trade Commission was created. A Federal farm loan system was established. Child labor legislation was enacted. A good roads bill was passed. Eight-hour laws were adopted. A Secretary of Labor was given a seat in the Cabinet of the President.

The Clayton amendment to the Sherman Anti-Trust Act was passed, freeing American labor and taking it from the category of commodities. By the Smith-Lever bill improvement of agricultural conditions was effected. A Corrupt Practices Act was adopted. A well-considered warehouse act was passed. Federal employment bureaus were created, farm loan banks were organized and the Federal Reserve system was established.

Privilege was uprooted. A corrupt lobby was driven from the national capital. A higher sense of individual and national duty was aroused. America enjoyed an unprecedented period of social and material progress.

During the time which intervened between the inauguration of a Democratic administration on March 4, 1913, and our entrance into the World War, we placed upon the statute books of our country more effective, constructive and remedial legislation than the Republican party had placed there in a generation.

During the great struggle which followed we had a leadership that carried America to greater heights of honor and power and glory than she had ever known before in her entire history.

Transition from this period of exalted Democratic leadership to the sordid record of the last three

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

and a half years makes the nation ashamed. It marks the contrast between a high conception of public service and an avid purpose to distribute spoils.

The dominant issues of the campaign are created by existing conditions.

Dishonesty, discrimination, extravagance and inefficiency exist in government. The burdens of taxation have become unbearable. Distress and bankruptcy in agriculture the basic industry of our country is affecting the happiness and prosperity of the whole people. The high cost of living is causing hardship and unrest.

The slowing down of industry is adding to the general distress. The tariff, the destruction of our foreign markets and the high cost of transportation are taking the profit out of agriculture, mining and other raw material industries. Large standing armies and the cost of preparing for war still cast their burdens upon humanity. These conditions the existing Republican administration has proved itself unwilling or unable to redress.

We pledge the Democratic party to drive from public places all who make barter of our national honor, its resources or the administration of its laws; to punish those guilty of these offenses.

To put none but the honest in public office; to practice economy in the expenditure of public money; to reverence and respect the rights of all under the Constitution.

To condemn and destroy government by the spy and the black-mailer, as by this Republican administration was both encouraged and practiced.



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The Democratic party believes in equal rights to all and special privilege to none. The Republican party holds that special privileges are essential to national prosperity. It believes that national prosperity must originate with the special interests and seep down through the channels of trade to the less favored industries, to the wage earners and small salaried employees. It has accordingly enthroned privilege and nurtured selfishness.

The Republican party is concerned chiefly with material things; the Democratic party is concerned chiefly with human rights. The masses, burdened by discriminating laws and unjust administration, are demanding relief. The favored special interests, represented by the Republican party, contented with their unjust privileges, are demanding that no change be made. The Democratic party stands for remedial legislation and progress. The Republican party stands still.

### WAR AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

#### CONSCRIPTION OF RESOURCES IN WAR TIME<sup>1</sup>

##### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We believe that in time of war the nation should draft for its defense not only its citizens but also every resource which may contribute to success. The country demands that should the United States ever again be called upon to defend itself by arms the President be empowered to draft such material resources and such services as may be required, and to stabilize the prices of services and essential commodities, whether utilized in actual warfare or private activity.

##### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

War is a relic of barbarism, and it is justifiable only as a measure of defense.

In the event of war in which the man power of the nation is drafted, all other resources should likewise be drafted. This will tend to discourage war by depriving it of its profits.

<sup>1</sup> See also planks on Army and Navy, below.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## LIMITATION OF ARMAMENT; REFERENDUM ON WAR <sup>1</sup>

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We firmly advocate the calling of a conference on the limitation of land forces, the use of submarines and poison gas, as proposed by President Coolidge, when by the adoption of a permanent reparations plan the conditions in Europe will make negotiations and co-operation opportune and possible.

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We demand a strict and sweeping reduction of armaments by land and sea, so that there shall be no competitive military program or naval building. Until agreements to this end have been made we advocate an army and navy adequate for our national safety.

Our government should secure a joint agreement with all nations for world disarmament and also for a referendum of war, except in case of actual or threatened attack.

Those who must furnish the blood and bear the burdens imposed by war should, whenever possible, be consulted before this supreme sacrifice is required of them.

## PROVISION FOR FORMER SERVICE MEN <sup>2</sup>

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We reaffirm the admiration and gratitude which we feel for our soldiers and sailors.

The Republican party pledges a continuing and increasing solicitude for all those suffering any disability as a result of service to the United States in time of war. No country and no administration has ever shown a more generous disposition in the care of its disabled or more thoughtful consideration in providing a sound administration for the solution of the many problems involved in making intended benefits fully, directly and promptly available to the veterans.

The confusion, inefficiency and maladministration existing heretofore since the establishment of a government agency for administer-

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We favor generous appropriations, honest management, and sympathetic care and assistance in the hospitalization, rehabilitation, and compensation of veterans of all wars and their dependents. The humanizing of the Veterans' Bureau is imperatively required.

<sup>1</sup> See also La Follette plank under League of Nations, below.

<sup>2</sup> The La Follette plank on Taxation provides for funds "for adjusted compensation solemnly pledged to the veterans of the World War."

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ing such benefits has in the main been cured by new legislation, and plans are being actively made looking to a further improvement in the operation of the Bureau. The basic statutes have been so liberalized as to bring within their terms one hundred thousand additional beneficiaries. The privilege of hospitalization in government hospitals, as recommended by President Coolidge, has been granted to all veterans irrespective of the origin of disability and over \$50,000,000 has been appropriated for hospital construction which will provide sufficient beds to care for all. Appropriations totaling over \$1,100,000,000 made by the Republican Congress for the care of the disabled evidenced the unmistakable purpose of the government not to consider costs when the welfare of these men is concerned. No legislation for the benefit of the disabled soldier proposed during the last four years by veterans' organizations has failed to receive consideration.

We pledge ourselves to meet the problems of the future affecting the care of our wounded and disabled in a spirit of liberality, and with that thoughtful consideration which will enable the government to give to the individual veteran that full measure of care guaranteed by an effective administration machinery to which his patriotic services and sacrifices entitle him.

### LEAGUE OF NATIONS; WORLD COURT

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The Republican party reaffirms its stand for agreement among the nations to prevent war and preserve peace. As an immediate step in this direction we indorse the Permanent Court of International

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The Democratic party pledges all its energies to the outlawing of the whole war system. We refuse to believe that the wholesale slaughter of human beings on the battlefield is any more necessary

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Justice and favor the adherence of the United States to this tribunal as recommended by President Coolidge. This government has definitely refused membership in the League of Nations and to assume any obligations under the Covenant of the League. On this we stand.

While we are unwilling to enter into political commitments which would involve us in the conflict of European policies, it should be the purpose and high privilege of the United States to continue to co-operate with other nations in humanitarian efforts in accordance with our cherished traditions. The basic principles of our foreign policy must be independence without indifference to the rights and necessities of others and co-operation without entangling alliances. This policy, overwhelmingly approved by the people, has been vindicated since the end of the Great War. America's participation in world affairs under the administration of President Harding and President Coolidge has demonstrated the wisdom and prudence of the national judgment. A most impressive example of the capacity of the United States to serve the cause of world peace without political affiliations was shown in the effective and beneficent work of the Dawes Commission toward the solution of the perplexing question of German reparations.

The first conference of great powers in Washington, called by President Harding, accomplished the limitation of armaments and the readjustment of the relations of the powers interested in the Far East. The conference resulted in an agreement to reduce armaments, relieve the nations involved from the great burdens of taxation arising from the competitive construc-

tion to man's highest development than is killing by individuals.

The only hope for world peace and for economic recovery lies in the organized efforts of sovereign nations co-operating to remove the causes of war and to substitute law and order for violence.

Under Democratic leadership a practical plan was devised under which fifty-four nations are now operating and which has for its fundamental purpose the free co-operation of all nations in the work of peace.

The government of the United States for the last four years has had no foreign policy, and consequently it has delayed the restoration of the political and economic agencies of the world. It has impaired our self-respect at home and injured our prestige abroad. It has curtailed our foreign markets and ruined our agricultural prices.

It is of supreme importance to civilization and to mankind that America be placed and kept on the right side of the greatest moral question of all time, and, therefore, the Democratic party renews its declaration of confidence in the ideals of world peace, the League of Nations and the World Court of Justice as together constituting the supreme effort of the statesmanship and religious conviction of our time to organize the world for peace.

Further, the Democratic party declares that it will be the purpose of the next administration to do all in its power to secure for our country that moral leadership in the family of nations which, in the providence of God, has been so clearly marked out for it.

There is no substitute for the League of Nations as an agency working for peace; therefore, we believe that, in the interest of

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tion and maintenance of capital battleships; assured a new, broader and better understanding in the Far East; brought the promise of peace in the region of the Pacific; and formally adopted the policy of the open door for trade and commerce in the great markets of the Far East.

This historic conference paved the way to avert the danger of renewed hostilities in Europe and to restore the necessary economic stability. While the military forces of America have been reduced to a peace footing, there has been an increase in the land and air forces abroad which constitutes a continual menace to the peace of the world and a bar to the return of prosperity.

The wisdom of our policy, now well defined, of giving practical aid to other peoples without assuming political obligations has been conspicuously demonstrated. The ready and generous response of America to the needs of the

permanent peace, and in the lifting of the great burdens of war from the backs of the people, and in order to establish a permanent foreign policy on these supreme questions, not subject to change with change of party administrations, it is desirable, wise and necessary to lift this question out of party politics, and to that end to take the sense of the American people at a referendum election, advisory to the government, to be held officially under act of Congress, free from all other questions and candidacies, after ample time for full consideration and discussion throughout the country, upon the question, in substance, as follows:

"Shall the United States become a member of the League of Nations upon such reservations or amendments to the Covenant of the League as the President and the Senate of the United States may agree upon?"

Immediately upon an affirmative vote we will carry out such mandate.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A substitute plank on the League of Nations was offered in the Democratic convention by Newton D. Baker of Ohio together with seven other members of the Platform Committee. It paralleled in large part the language of the majority report but omitted all reference to a referendum election, advisory to the government. On the floor of the convention this minority proposal was debated fully at the session of Saturday afternoon, June 28th, Mr. Baker attacking the proposed referendum vigorously. The more essential passages in the minority proposal were as follows: "We approve the proposal so repeatedly trifled with by the Republican party, that the United States directly adhere to the Permanent Court of International Justice established under the auspices of the League of Nations. . . . The Democratic party favors membership in that co-operative agency [the League of Nations] under conditions which will make it clear that we are not committed to use force, and such further conditions as the President with the approval of the Senate may deem appropriate to make our co-operation effective in fact and consistent with our constitutional practice. Under a Democratic administration the government will endeavor to lift this great question above partisanship and to reflect the best opinion of those who place the welfare of the nation above partisanship. It will pursue a course which safeguards American interests and conforms to American traditions, aspirations and ideals. It will co-operate with civilization to banish war." Put to a vote of the convention the minority substitute plank was defeated by 742½ to 353½.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

suddenly stricken people of Japan and the starving in Russia gave evidence of our helpful interest in the welfare of the distressed in other lands.

The work of our representatives in dealing with subjects of such universal concern as the traffic in women and children, the production and distribution of narcotic drugs, the sale of arms, and with matters affecting public health and morals, demonstrates that we can effectively do our part for humanity and civilization without forfeiting, limiting or restricting our national freedom of action.

The American people do cherish their independence, but their sense of duty to all mankind will ever prompt them to give their support, service and leadership to every cause which makes for peace and amity among the nations of the world.

We favor the holding from time to time of international conferences for the advancement and codification of international law.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

Common international action to effect the economic recovery of the world from the effects of the World War.

. . . . .

We denounce the mercenary system of foreign policy under recent administrations in the interests of financial imperialists, oil monopolists and international bankers, which has at times degraded our State Department from its high service as a strong and kindly intermediary of defenseless governments to a trading outpost for those interests and concession seekers engaged in the exploitation of weaker nations, as contrary to the will of the American people, destructive of domestic development and provocative of war. We favor an active foreign policy to bring about a revision of the Versailles Treaty in accordance with the terms of the armistice, and to promote firm treaty agreements with all nations to outlaw wars, abolish conscription, drastically reduce land, air and naval armaments, and guarantee public referendums on peace and war.

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### IRELAND

#### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

*Resolved*, That we deeply sympathize with the aspirations of the Irish people for freedom and independence.<sup>1</sup>

### GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

By treaties of peace safeguarding our rights and without derogating those of our former associates in arms, the Republican administration ended the war between this country and Germany and Austria. We have concluded and signed with other nations during the past three years more than fifty treaties and international agreements in the furtherance of peace and good will.

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

#### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

*Resolved*, That in the prevailing starvation in Germany, which, according to authoritative evidence, is beyond the scope of private charity, and in the event of like destitution in any other country, we consider it humane and just, and in conformity with our traditions and former practices, that the aid of our government should be extended in the form of the delivery of surplus food supplies to a reasonable amount and upon such conditions as the emergency may justify.<sup>1</sup>

### RUSSIA, JAPAN

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The ready and generous response of America to the needs of the suddenly stricken people of Japan and the starving in Russia gave evidence of our helpful interest in the welfare of the distressed in other lands.

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

<sup>1</sup> Separate resolution adopted at the La Follette Conference for Progressive Political Action, following adoption of the platform, Cleveland, July 5th.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## ARMENIA AND THE LAUSANNE TREATY

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We condemn the Lausanne Treaty. It barter legitimate American rights and betrays Armenia for the Chester oil concession.

We favor the protection of American rights in Turkey and the fulfilment of President Wilson's arbitral award respecting Armenia.

## GREECE

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We welcome to the sisterhood of republics the ancient land of Greece, which gave to our party its priceless name. We extend to her government and people our cordial good wishes.

## LATIN AMERICA

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

New sanctions and new proofs of permanent accord have marked our relations with all Latin America. The long-standing controversy between Chile and Peru has been advanced toward settlement by its submission to the President of the United States as arbitrator; and with the helpful co-operation of this country a treaty has been signed by the representatives of sixteen American republics, which will stabilize conditions on the American continent and minimize the opportunities for war.

Our difficulties with Mexico have happily yielded to a most friendly adjustment. Mutual confidence has been restored and a pathway for that friendliness and helpfulness which should exist between this government and the government of our neighboring republic has been

From the day of their birth friendly relations have existed between the Latin-American republics and the United States. That friendship grows stronger as our relations become more intimate. The Democratic party sends to these republics its cordial greetings. God has made us neighbors—justice shall keep us friends.

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marked. Agreements have been entered into for the determination by judicial commissions of the claims of the citizens of each country against the respective governments. We can confidently look forward to more permanent and more stable relations with this republic that joins for so many miles our Southern border.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

*Resolved*, That we denounce every such use of the armed forces of the United States to aid in the exploitation of weaker nations, as has occurred all too frequently in our relations with Haiti, San Domingo, Nicaragua and other nations of Central and South America.<sup>1</sup>

### FOREIGN DEBTS <sup>2</sup>

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

In fulfillment of our pledge in the national platform of 1920, we have steadfastly refused to consider the cancellation of foreign debts. Our attitude has not been that of an oppressive creditor seeking immediate return and ignoring existing financial conditions. Our position has been based on the conviction that a moral obligation such as was incurred should not be disregarded.

We stand for settlements with all debtor countries similar in character with our debt agreement with Great Britain. That settlement, achieved under a Republican administration, was the greatest international financial transaction in the history of the world. Under the terms of the agreement the United States now receives an annual return upon the \$4,600,000,000

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

<sup>1</sup> Separate resolution adopted at the La Follette conference, Cleveland, July 5th.

<sup>2</sup> The platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican Convention in Cleveland favored "diligent action to collect the accumulated interest upon the eleven billion dollars owing us by foreign governments."

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

owing to us by Great Britain, with a definite obligation of ultimate payment in full.

The justness of the basis employed has been formally recognized by other debtor nations. Thirty-five per cent of the total foreign debt is now in progress of liquidation.

Great nations cannot recognize or admit the principle of repudiation. To do so would undermine the integrity essential for international trade, commerce and credit.

### NATIONAL DEPENDENCIES

#### ALASKA

##### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We indorse the policy of the present administration in reference to Alaska and favor a continuance of the constructive development of the territory.

##### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The maladministration of affairs in Alaska is a matter of concern to all our people.

Under the Republican administration in Alaska development has ceased and the fishing industry has been seriously impaired.

We pledge ourselves to correct the evils which have grown up in the development of that rich domain.

An adequate form of local self-government for Alaska must be provided, and to that end we favor the establishment of a full territorial form of government for that territory, similar to that enjoyed by all the territories except Alaska during the last century of American history.

#### PHILIPPINES

##### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The Philippine policy of the Republican party has been and is inspired by the belief that our duty towards the Filipino people is a national obligation which should

##### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The Filipino people have succeeded in maintaining a stable government and have thus fulfilled the only condition laid down by Congress as a prerequisite to the grant-



## APPENDIX

remain entirely free from partisan politics.

In accepting the obligation which came to them with the control of the Philippine Islands the American people had only the wish to serve, advance and improve the condition of the Filipino people. This thought will continue to be the dominating factor in the American consideration of the many problems which must inevitably grow out of our relationship to these people.

If the time comes when it is evident to Congress that independence would be better for the people of the Philippines with respect to both their domestic concerns and their status in the world, and the Filipino people then desire complete independence, the American government will gladly accord it. The results of a careful study of the conditions in the Philippine Islands convince us that the time for such action has not yet arrived.

ing of independence. We declare that it is now our liberty and our duty to keep our promise to these people by granting them immediately the independence which they so honorably covet.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

*Resolved*, That we favor the immediate and complete independence of the Philippine Islands, in accordance with the pledges of the official representatives of the American people.

### HAWAII

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We favor a continuance for the territory of Hawaii of Federal assistance in harbor improvements, the appropriation of its share of Federal funds, and the systematic extension of the settlement of public lands by the Hawaiian race.

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We believe in a policy for continuing the improvements of the National Park, the harbors and breakwaters, and the Federal roads of the territory of Hawaii.

### VIRGIN ISLANDS

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We recommend legislation for the welfare of the inhabitants of the Virgin Islands.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

*Resolved*, That appropriate legislation be enacted which will provide for the people of the Virgin Islands a more permanent form of civil government such as will enable them to attain their economic, industrial and political betterment.<sup>1</sup>

## ECONOMIC ISSUES: AGRICULTURE

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

In dealing with agriculture, the Republican party recognizes that we are faced with a fundamental national problem, and that the prosperity and welfare of the nation as a whole is dependent upon the prosperity and welfare of our agricultural population.

We recognize that agricultural activities are still struggling with adverse conditions that have brought deep distress. We pledge the party to take whatever steps are necessary to bring back a balanced condition between agriculture, industry and labor, which was destroyed by the Democratic party through an unfortunate administration of legislation passed as war measures.

We affirm that under the Republican administration the problems of the farmer have received more serious consideration than ever before, both by definite Executive action and Congressional action, not only in the field of general legislation, but also in the enactment of laws to meet emergency situations.

The restoration of general prosperity and of the purchasing power of our people through tariff protection has resulted in an increased domestic consumption of food products, and the prices of many agricultural commodities are above the world price level by reason of direct tariff protection.

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

During the four years of Republican government the economic condition of the American farmer has changed from comfort to bankruptcy, with all its attendant miseries. The chief causes of this are:

(a) The Republican policy of isolation in international affairs has prevented Europe from getting back to its normal balance, and, by leaving unsolved the economic problems abroad, has driven the European city population from industrial activities to the soil in large numbers in order to earn the mere necessities of life. This has deprived the American farmer of his normal export trade.

(b) The Republican policy of a prohibitive tariff, exemplified in the Fordney-McCumber law, which has forced the American farmer, with his export market debilitated, to buy manufactured goods at sustained high domestic levels, thereby making him the victim of the profiteer.

(c) The Republican policy of high transportation rates, both rail and water, which has made it impossible for the farmer to ship his produce to market at even a living profit.

To offset these policies and their disastrous results, and to restore the farmer again to economic equality with other industrialists, we pledge ourselves:

<sup>1</sup> Separate resolution adopted at the La Follette conference, Cleveland, July 5th.

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Under the leadership of the President at a most critical time a corporation was organized by private capital making available \$100,000,000 to assist the farmers of the Northwest.

Realizing the disturbance in the agricultural export market, the result of the financial depression in Europe, and appreciating that the export field would be enormously improved by economic rehabilitation and the resulting increased consuming power, sympathetic support and direction were given to the work of the American representatives on the European Reparations Commission.

The revival in 1921 of the War Finance Corporation, with loans of over \$300,000,000, averted a complete collapse in the agricultural industry.

We have established new intermediate credit banks for agriculture and increased the capital of the Federal Farm Loan System. Emergency loans have been granted to drought-stricken areas.

We have enacted into law the Co-operative Marketing Act, the Grain Futures and Packer Control Acts; given to agriculture direct representation on the Federal Reserve Board and on the Federal Trade Commission.

We have greatly strengthened our foreign marketing service for the disposal of our agricultural products.

The crux of the problem from the standpoint of the farmer is the net profit he receives after his outlay. The process of bringing the average prices of what he buys and what he sells closer together can be indirectly expedited by reduction in taxes, steady employment in industry and stability in business. This process can be directly expedited by lower freight

(a) To adopte an international policy of such co-operation, by direct official instead of indirect and evasive unofficial means, as will re-establish the farmers' export market by restoring the industrial balance in Europe and the normal flow of international trade with the settlement of Europe's economic problems.

(b) To adjust the tariff so that the farmer and all other classes can buy again in a competitive manufacturers' market.

(c) To readjust and lower rail and water rates, which will make our markets, both for the buyer and the seller, national and international instead of regional and local.

(d) To bring about the early completion of internal waterway systems for transportation, and to develop our water powers for cheaper fertilizer and use on our farms.

(e) To stimulate by every proper governmental activity the progress of the co-operative marketing movement and the establishment of an export marketing corporation or commission in order that the exportable surplus may not establish the price of the whole crop.

(f) To secure for the farmer credits suitable for his needs.

(g) By the establishment of these policies and others naturally supplementary thereto, to reduce the margin between what the producer receives for his products and the consumer has to pay for his supplies, to the end that we secure an equality for agriculture.

.....  
We reaffirm and pledge the fulfillment of the policy, with reference to Muscle Shoals, as declared and passed by the Democratic majority of the Sixty-fourth

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

rates, by better marketing through cooperative effort and a more scientific organization of the physical and human machinery of distribution and by a greater diversification of farm products.

We promise every assistance in the reorganization of the marketing system on sounder and more economical lines and, where diversification is needed, government assistance during the period of transition. We favor adequate tariff protection to such of our agricultural products as are threatened by foreign competition.

We favor, without putting the government into business, the establishment of a Federal system of organization for co-operative marketing of farm products.

The vigorous efforts of this administration towards broadening our exports market will be continued.

The Republican party pledges itself to the development and enactment of measures which will place the agricultural interests of America on a basis of economic equality with other industry to insure its prosperity and success.

Congress in the National Defense Act of 1916, "for the production of nitrates or other products needed for munitions of war and useful in the manufacture of fertilizers."

We hold that the production of cheaper and higher grade fertilizers is essential to agricultural prosperity. We demand prompt action by Congress for the operation of Muscle Shoals plants to maximum capacity in the production, distribution and sale of commercial fertilizers to the farmers of the country, and we oppose any legislation that limits the production of fertilizers at Muscle Shoals by limiting the amount of power to be used in their manufacture.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

Creation of government marketing corporation to provide a direct route between farm producer and city consumer, and to assure farmers fair prices for their products and protect consumers from the profiteers in foodstuffs and other necessities of life. Legislation to conduct the meat packing industry.

Protection and aid of co-operative enterprises by national and state legislation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also La Follette plank on Labor, below. The platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention in Cleveland also contained the following: "The present condition of American agriculture constitutes an emergency of the gravest character. The Department of Commerce report shows that during 1923 there was a steady and marked increase in dividends paid by the great industrial corporations. The same is true of the steam and electric railways and practically all other large corporations. On the other hand, the Secretary of Agriculture reports that in the fifteen principal wheat-growing states more than 108,000

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## CONSERVATION

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We believe in the development, effective and efficient, whether of oil, timber, coal or water power resources of the government, only as needed and only after the public need has become a matter of public record, protected with scrupulous carefulness and vigilant watchfulness against waste, speculation and monopoly.

The natural resources of the country belong to all the people and are a part of an estate belonging to generations yet unborn. The government policy should be to safeguard, develop and utilize these possessions. The conservation policy of the nation originated with the Republican party under the inspiration of Theodore Roosevelt. We hold it a privilege of the

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We pledge recovery of the navy's oil reserves and all other parts of the public domain which have been fraudulently or illegally leased or otherwise wrongfully transferred to the control of private interests; vigorous prosecution of all public officials, private citizens and corporations that participated in these transactions; revision of the Water Power Act, the General Leasing Act and all other legislation relating to the public domain that may be essential to its conservation and honest and efficient use on behalf of the people of the country.

We believe that the nation should retain title to its water power and we favor the expeditious creation and development of

farmers since 1920 have lost their farms through foreclosure or bankruptcy; that more than 122,000 have surrendered their property without legal proceedings, and that nearly 375,000 have retained possession of their property only through the leniency of their creditors, making a total of more than 600,000, or 26 per cent, of all farmers who have virtually been bankrupted since 1920 in these fifteen states alone. Almost unlimited prosperity for the great corporations and ruin and bankruptcy for agriculture is the direct and logical result of the policies and legislation which deflated the farmer while extending almost unlimited credit to the great corporations; which protected with exorbitant tariffs the industrial magnates, but depressed the prices of the farmers' products by financial juggling while greatly increasing the cost of what he must buy; which guarantee excessive freight rates to the railroads and put a premium on wasteful management while saddling an unwarranted burden on to the backs of the American farmer; which permitted gambling in the products of the farm by grain speculators to the great detriment of the farmer and to the great profit of the grain gambler." . . .

"We favor drastic reduction of the exorbitant duties on manufactures provided in the Fordney-McCumber tariff legislation, the prohibiting of gambling by speculators and profiteers in agricultural products; the reconstruction of the Federal Reserve and Federal Farm Loan systems, so as to eliminate control by usurers, speculators and international financiers, and to make the credit of the nation available upon fair terms to all and without discrimination to business men, farmers and home builders we favor such further legislation as may be needful or helpful in promoting and protecting co-operative enterprises, and demand that the Interstate Commerce Commission proceed forthwith to reduce by an approximation to pre-war levels the present freight rates on agricultural products, including live-stock, and upon the materials required upon American farms for agricultural purposes."



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

Republican party to build as a memorial to him on the foundation which he laid.

our water power. We favor strict public control and conservation of all the nation's natural resources, such as coal, iron, oil and timber, and their use in such manner as may be to the best interest of our citizens.

The conservation of migratory birds, the establishment of game preserves and the protection and conservation of wild life are of importance to agriculturists as well as sportsmen.

Our disappearing natural resource of timber calls for a national policy of reforestation.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

Public ownership of the nation's water power and creation of a public superpower system. Strict public control and permanent conservation of all national resources, including coal, iron and other ores, oil and timber lands, in the interest of the people. Promotion of public works in times of business depression.

### RECLAMATION

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

Federal reclamation of the arid and semiarid lands in the West has been the subject of intensive study in the Department of the Interior during the past fiscal year. New policies and methods of operation have been adopted which promise to insure the successful accomplishment of the objects sought. The completion of this reorganization plan is regarded as one of the achievements of the present administration in the interests of farmers immediately and of all the people ultimately.

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The Democratic party was foremost in urging reclamation for the immediate arid and semiarid lands of the West. These lands are located in the public-land states and, therefore, it is the duty of the government to utilize their resources by reclamation.

Homestead entrymen under reclamation projects have suffered from the extravagant inefficiencies and mistakes of the Federal government.

The Reclamation Act of 1924, recommended by the Fact-Finding Commission and added as an amendment to the second deficiency appropriation bill at the last session of Congress, was eliminated from that bill by the Republican conferees in the report they presented to Congress one hour before adjournment. The Democratic

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party pledges itself actively, efficiently and economically to carry on the reclamation projects and to make equitable adjustment for the mistakes the government has made.

### LABOR

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The increasing stress of industrial life, the constant and necessary efforts because of world competition to increase production and decrease costs, have made it especially incumbent on those in authority to protect labor from undue exactions. We commend Congress for its prompt adoption of the recommendation of President Coolidge for a constitutional amendment authorizing Congress to legislate on the subject of child labor and we urge the prompt consideration of that amendment by the legislatures of the various states.

There is no success great enough to justify the employment of women in labor under conditions which will impair their natural functions. We favor high standards for wages, working and living conditions among the women employed in industry.

We pledge a continuance of the efforts of the Republican administration to eliminate the seven-day twelve-hour work week in industry. We regard with satisfaction the elimination of the twelve-hour day in the steel industry and the agreement eliminating the seven-day work week of alternate thirteen and eleven hours, brought about through the efforts of President Harding and President Coolidge.

We declare our faith in the principle of the eight-hour day.

We pledge a continuation of the

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

Labor is not a commodity. It is human. We favor collective bargaining and laws regulating hours of labor and conditions under which labor is performed.

We favor the enactment of legislation providing that the products of convict labor shipped from one state to another shall be subject to the laws of the latter state, exactly as though they had been produced therein.

In order to mitigate unemployment attending business depression, we urge the enactment of legislation authorizing that the construction and repair of public works be initiated in periods of acute unemployment.

We pledge the party to co-operate with the state governments for the welfare, education and protection of child life and all necessary safeguards against exhaustive, debilitating employment conditions for women.

Without the votes of Democratic members of the Congress the Child Labor Amendment would not have been submitted for ratification.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

work of rehabilitating workers in industry as conducted by the Federal Board for Vocational Education, and favor adequate appropriations for this purpose.

We favor a broader and better system of vocational education, a more adequate system of Federal Free Employment Agencies with facilities for assisting the movements of seasonal and migratory labor, including farm labor, and an ample organization for bringing the man and the job together.

## INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

Adequate laws to guarantee to farmers and industrial workers the right to organize and bargain collectively, through representatives of their own choosing, for the maintenance or improvement of their standards of life.<sup>1</sup>

Prompt ratification of the Child Labor Amendment, and subsequent enactment of a Federal law to protect children in industry. Removal of legal discriminations against women by measures not prejudicial to legislation necessary for the protection of women and for the advancement of social welfare.

## PUBLIC ECONOMY <sup>2</sup>

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We demand, and the people of the United States have a right to demand, rigid economy in government. A policy of strict economy enforced by the Republican administration since 1921 has made possible a reduction in taxation and

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We pledge the Democratic party to put none but the honest in public office; to practice economy in the expenditure of public money.

<sup>1</sup> See also provision for abolition of injunctions in labor disputes in the La Follette program under Federal Courts, below.

<sup>2</sup> See also under Party Records and Issues, above, and Corruption in Government, below. The platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention in Cleveland contained the following: "We favor reduction of Federal taxes upon individual incomes and legitimate business, limiting tax exactions strictly to the requirements of the government administered with rigid economy, particularly by curtailment of the \$800,000,000 now annually expended for the army and navy in preparation for future wars; by the recovery of the hundreds of millions stolen from the Treasury through fraudulent war contracts and the corrupt leasing of the public resources; and by diligent action to collect the accumulated interest upon the \$11,000,000,000 owing us by foreign governments."

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has enabled the government to reduce the public debt by \$2,500,000,000. This policy rigorously enforced has resulted in a progressive reduction of public expenditures until they are now \$2,000,000,000 per annum less than in 1921. The tax burdens of the people have been relieved to the extent of \$1,250,000,000 per annum. Government securities have increased in value more than \$3,000,000,000. Deficits have been converted into surpluses. The budget system has been firmly established and the number of Federal employees has been reduced by more than 100,000. We commend the firm insistence of President Coolidge upon rigid government economy and pledge our earnest support to this end.

### TAXATION AND PUBLIC DEBT

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We believe that the achievements of the Republican administration in reducing taxation by \$1,250,000,000 per annum, reducing the public debt by \$2,432,000,000, installing a budget system, decreasing the public expenditures from \$5,500,000,000 per annum to approximately \$3,400,000,000 per annum, thus restoring the ordinary expenditures of the government to substantially a pre-war basis and in the complete restoration of public credit, the payment or refunding of seven and a half billions of public obligations without disturbance of credit or industry—all in the short period of three years, present a record unsurpassed in the history of public finance.

The intelligent assessment of taxes, their fair and scientific collection and the efficient and economical expenditure of the money

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The greatest contributing factor in the increase and unbalancing of prices is unscientific taxation. After having increased taxation and the cost of living by two billion dollars, under the Fordney-McCumber tariff, all that the Republican party could suggest in the way of relief was a cut of \$300,000,000 in direct taxes; and that was to be given principally to those with the largest incomes.

Although there was no evidence of a lack of capital for investment to meet the present requirements of all legitimate industrial enterprises, and although the farmers and general consumers were bearing the brunt of tariff favors already granted to special interests, the administration was unable to devise any plan except one to grant further aid to the few.

Fortunately this plan of the ad-

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

received by the government are essential to the prosperity of our nation.

Carelessness in levying taxes inevitably breeds extravagance in expenditures. The wisest system of taxation rests most lightly on the individual and economic life of the country. The public demand for a sound permanent tax policy is insistent.

Progressive tax reduction should be accomplished through tax reform. It should not be confined to less than 4,000,000 of our citizens who pay direct taxes, but is the right of the more than 100,000,000 who are daily paying their taxes indirectly through their living expenses. Congress has in the main confined its work to tax reduction. The matter of tax reform is still unsettled and is equally essential.

We pledge ourselves to the progressive reduction of the taxes of all the people as rapidly as may be done with due provision for the essential expenditures of the government administered with rigid economy and to place our tax system on a sound peace-time basis.

We indorse the plan of President Coolidge to call in November a national conference of Federal and state officials for the development of effective methods of lightening the tax burdens of our citizens and adjustment of questions of taxation as between the national and state governments.

We favor the creation by appropriate legislation of a nonpartisan Federal commission to make a comprehensive study and report upon the tax systems of the state and Federal governments to serve as a basis for an intelligent reformation of our systems of taxation, and as a basis for the proper adjustment of the subjects of taxa-

ministration failed, and, under Democratic leadership, aided by progressive Republicans, a more equitable one was adopted, which reduced direct taxes by about four hundred and fifty million dollars.

The issue between the President and the Democratic party is not one of tax reduction or of the conservation of capital. It is an issue of the relative burden of taxation and of the distribution of capital as affected by the taxation of income. The President still stands on the so-called Mellon plan, which his party has just refused to indorse or mention in its platform.

The income tax was intended as a tax upon wealth. It was not intended to take from the poor any part of the necessities of life. We hold that the fairest tax with which to raise revenues for the Federal government is the income tax.

We favor a graduated tax upon incomes, so adjusted as to lay the burdens of government upon the taxpayers in proportion to the benefits they enjoy and their ability to pay.

We oppose the so-called nuisance taxes, sales taxes, and all other forms of taxation that unfairly shift to the consumer the burdens of taxation.

We refer to the Democratic revenue measure passed by the last Congress as distinguished from the Mellon tax plan, as an illustration of the policy of the Democratic party. We first made a flat reduction of 25 per cent upon the tax of all incomes payable this year, and then we so changed the proposed Mellon plan as to eliminate taxes upon the poor, reducing them upon moderate incomes and, in a lesser degree, upon the incomes of multimillionaires. We hold that all taxes are unneces-



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tion as between the national and state governments with fairness and justice to the taxpayer and in conformity with sound economic principles.

sarily high, and pledge ourselves to further reductions.

We denounce the Mellon tax plan as a device to relieve multimillionaires at the expense of other taxpayers, and we accept the issue of taxation tendered by President Coolidge.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

Retention of surtaxes on swollen incomes; restoration of the tax on excessive profits, on stock dividends, profits undistributed to evade taxes, rapidly progressive taxes on large estates and inheritances and repeal of excessive tariff duties, especially on trust-controlled necessities of life, and of nuisance taxes on consumption, to relieve the people of the present unjust burden of taxation and compel those who profited by the war to pay their share of the war's costs and to provide the funds for adjusted compensation solemnly pledged to the veterans of the World War.<sup>1</sup>

### TARIFF<sup>2</sup>

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We reaffirm our belief in the protective tariff to extend needed protection to our productive industries. We believe in protection as a national policy with equal regard to all sections and to agriculture and industry. It is only by adherence to this policy that the interests of the consumers can be safeguarded and American agriculture, American labor and American manufactures be assured a

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act is the most unjust, unscientific and dishonest tariff tax measure ever enacted in our history. It is class legislation, which defrauds all the people for the benefit of a few; it heavily increases the cost of living, penalizes agriculture, corrupts the government, fosters paternalism, and, in the long run, does not benefit the very interests for which it was enacted.

<sup>1</sup> The platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention in Cleveland also denounced the Mellon tax plan "as a device to relieve multimillionaires at the expense of other taxpayers," and favored "a taxation policy providing for immediate reductions upon moderate incomes, large increases in the inheritance-tax rates upon large estates to prevent the indefinite accumulation by inheritance of great fortunes in a few hands; taxes upon excess profits to penalize profiteering, and complete publicity, under proper safeguards, of all Federal tax returns," and declared opposition "to the sales tax or any other device to shift this obligation [*i.e.*, to pay taxes] onto the backs of the poor in higher prices and increased cost of living."

<sup>2</sup> See also planks under Agriculture, above. The La Follette program includes "repeal of excessive tariff duties, especially on trust-controlled necessities of life." The platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention in Cleveland favored "drastic reduction of the exorbitant duties on manufactures provided in the Fordney-McCumber tariff legislation."

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

return sufficient to perpetuate American standards of life.

A protective tariff is designed to support the high American economic level of life for the average family and to prevent a lowering to the levels of economic life prevailing in other lands. It is the history of the nation that the protective system has ever justified itself by promoting industrial activity and employment, enormously increasing our purchasing power, restoring confidence and bringing increased prosperity to all.

The tariff protection to our industry works for increased consumption of domestic agricultural products by an employed population, instead of one unable to purchase the necessities of life. Without the strict maintenance of the tariff principle our farmers will need always to compete with cheap lands and cheap labor abroad, and with lower standards of living.

The enormous value of the protective principle has once more been demonstrated by the effects of the Emergency Tariff Act of 1921 and the Tariff Act of 1922.

We believe that the power of the President to decrease or increase any rate of duty in the Tariff Act furnishes a safeguard against excessive duties and against too low customs charges, and affords ample opportunity for tariff duties to be adjusted after a hearing that they may cover the actual differences in the cost of production in the United States and the principal competing countries of the world.

We also believe that the application of this provision of the Tariff Act will contribute to business stability by making unnecessary general disturbances which are usually incident to general tariff revision.

We denounce the Republican tariff laws, which are written in great part in aid of monopolies, and thus prevent that reasonable exchange of commodities which would enable foreign countries to buy our surplus agricultural and manufactured products, with resultant benefit to the toilers and producers of America. Trade interchange, on the basis of reciprocal advantages to the countries participating, is a time-honored doctrine of Democratic faith. We declare our party's position to be in favor of a tax on commodities entering the customs houses that will promote effective competition, protect against monopoly and at the same time produce a fair revenue to support the government.

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### BANKING AND CURRENCY

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We denounce the recent cruel and unjust contraction of legitimate and necessary credit and currency, which was directly due to the so-called deflation policy of the Republican party as declared in its national platform of June, 1920, and in the speech of acceptance of its candidate for the presidency.

Within eighteen months after the election of 1920 this policy resulted in withdrawing bank loans and discounts by over five billions of dollars and in contracting our currency by over fifteen hundred millions of dollars. This contraction bankrupted hundreds of thousands of farmers and stock growers in America and resulted in widespread industrial depression and unemployment.

We demand that the Federal Reserve system be so administered as to give stability to industry, commerce and finance, as was intended by the Democratic party, which gave the Federal Reserve system to the nation.

#### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

Reconstruction of the Federal Reserve and Federal farm loan systems to provide for direct public control of the nation's money and credit, to make it available on fair terms to all, and national and state legislatures to permit and promote co-operative banking.

### RAILROADS

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The people demand and are entitled to have prompt and efficient transportation at the lowest rates consistent with good service and a reasonable return upon the value of the property devoted to public service.

We believe that the American people demand a careful and

The sponsors for the Esch-Cummins Transportation Act of 1920, at the time of its presentation to Congress, stated that it had for its purpose the reduction of the cost of transportation, the improvement of service, the bettering of labor conditions, the promotion of peaceful co-operation between em-

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

scientific readjustment of railroad rate schedules with a view to the encouragement of agriculture and basic industries without the impairment of necessary railroad service.

The present laws regulating railroads which were enacted to meet post-war conditions should be modified from time to time as experience develops the necessity thereof.

The consolidation of railroads subject to the approval of the Interstate Commerce Commission into fewer competitive systems will result in advantages to the public.

The Labor Board provisions of the present law should be amended whenever it appears necessary to meet changed conditions. Collective bargaining, mediation and voluntary arbitration are the most important steps in maintaining peaceful labor relations and should be encouraged. We do not believe in compulsory action at any time in the settlement of labor disputes.

Public opinion must be the final arbiter in any crisis which so vitally affects public welfare as the suspension of transportation. Therefore the interests of the public require the maintenance of an impartial tribunal which can in an emergency make an investigation of the facts and publish its conclusions. This is essential as a basis for popular judgment.

We favor a stable, consistent and constructive policy toward our railroads.

ployer and employee, and, at the same time, the assurance of a fair and just return to the railroads upon their investment.

We are in accord with these announced purposes, but contend that the act has failed to accomplish them. It has failed to reduce the cost of transportation. The promised improvement in service has not been realized. The labor provisions of the act have proven unsatisfactory in settling differences between employer and employees. The so-called recapture clause has worked to the advantage of the strong and has been of no benefit to the weak.

The pronouncement in the act for the development of both rail and water transportation has proved futile. Water transportation upon our inland waterways has not been encouraged, and limitation of our coastwise trade is threatened by the administration of the act. It has unnecessarily interfered with the power of the states to regulate purely intrastate transportation. It must, therefore, be so rewritten that the high purposes which the public welfare demands may be accomplished.

Railroad freight rates should be so readjusted as to give the bulky, basic, low-priced raw commodities, such as agricultural products, coal and ores, the lowest rates, placing the higher rates upon more valuable and less bulky manufactured products.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

Repeal of the Cummins-Esch law. Public ownership of railroads, with democratic operation, with definite safeguards against bureaucratic control.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention in Cleveland demanded "that the Interstate Commerce Commis-

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### WATERWAYS, WATER POWER AND FLOOD CONTROL

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

Fully realizing the vital importance of transportation in both cost and service to all our people we favor the construction of the most feasible waterways from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic seaboard and the Gulf of Mexico, and the improvement and development of rivers, harbors and waterways, inland and coastwise, to the fullest extent justified by the present and potential tonnage available.

We favor a comprehensive survey of the conditions under which the flood waters of the Colorado River may be controlled and utilized for the benefit of the people of the states which border thereon.

The Federal Water Power Act establishes a national water-power policy, and the way has thereby been opened for the greatest water-power development in our history under conditions which preserve the initiative of our people while protecting the public interests.

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We favor and will promote deep waterways from the Great Lakes to the Gulf and to the Atlantic Ocean.

We favor a policy for the fostering and building of inland waterways and the removal of discrimination against water transportation. Flood control and the lowering of flood levels is essential to the safety of life and property, the productivity of our lands, the navigability of our streams and the reclaiming of our wet and overflowed lands and the creation of hydroelectric power.

We favor the expeditious construction of flood relief works on the Mississippi and Colorado rivers and also such reclamation and irrigation projects upon the Colorado River as may be found to be feasible and practicable.

We favor liberal appropriations for prompt co-ordinated surveys by the United States to determine the possibilities of general navigation improvements and water-power development on navigable streams and their tributaries, to secure reliable information as to the most economical navigation improvement, in combination with the most efficient and complete development of water power.

We favor suspension of the granting of Federal water-power licenses by the Federal Water-Power Commission until Congress has received reports from the Water-Power Commission with regard to applications for such licenses.

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sion proceed forthwith to reduce by an approximation to pre-war levels, the present freight rates on agricultural products, including livestock, and upon the materials required upon American farms for agricultural purposes."



# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

A deep waterway from the Great Lakes to the sea.<sup>1</sup>

### HIGHWAYS

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The Federal Aid Road Act, adopted by the Republican Congress in 1921, has been of inestimable value in the development of the highway systems of the several states and of the nation. We pledge a continuation of this policy of Federal co-operation with the states in highway building.

We favor the construction of roads and trails in our national forests necessary to their protection and utilization. In appropriations therefor the taxes which these lands would pay if taxable should be considered as a controlling factor.

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

Improved roads are of vital importance, not only to commerce and industry but also to agriculture and rural life. We call attention to the record of the Democratic party in this matter and favor a continuance of Federal aid under existing Federal and state agencies.

### AVIATION

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We advocate the early enactment of such legislation and the taking of such steps by the government as will tend to promote commercial aviation.

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We favor a sustained development of aviation, both by the government and commercially.

## GOVERNMENT CONTROL, CORPORATIONS AND MONOPOLIES<sup>2</sup>

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The prosperity of the American nation rests on the vigor of private initiative which has bred a spirit of independence and self-

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The Federal Trade Commission has submitted to the Republican administration numerous reports showing the existence of monop-

<sup>1</sup> To the foregoing the platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention in Cleveland added: "The government should, in conjunction with Canada, take immediate action to give the Northwestern states an outlet to the ocean for cargoes without change in bulk, thus making the primary markets on the Great Lakes equal to those of New York."

<sup>2</sup> See also planks, below, on Coal.

## APPENDIX

reliance. The Republican party stands now, as always, against all attempts to put the government into business. American industry should not be compelled to struggle against government competition. The right of the government to regulate, supervise and control public utilities in the public interest we believe should be strengthened, but we are firmly opposed to the nationalization or government ownership of public utilities.

olies and combinations in restraint of trade, and has recommended proceedings against these violators of the law.

The few prosecutions which have resulted from this abundant evidence furnished by this agency created by the Democratic party, while proving the indifference of the administration to the violations of law by trusts and monopolies and its friendship for them, nevertheless demonstrate the value of the Federal Trade Commission.

We declare that a private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable, and pledge the Democratic party to vigorous enforcement of existing laws against monopoly and illegal combinations and to the enactment of such further measures as may be necessary.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

The use of power of the Federal government to crush private monopoly, not to foster it.

### FRAUDULENT STOCK SALES

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We favor the immediate passage of such legislation as may be necessary to enable the states efficiently to enforce their laws relating to the gradual financial strangling of innocent investors, workers and consumers, caused by the indiscriminate promotion, refinancing and reorganizing of corporations on an inflated and over-capitalized basis, resulting already in the undermining and collapse of many railroads, public service and industrial corporations, manifesting itself in unemployment, irreparable loss and waste, and which constitute a serious menace to the stability of our economic system.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## MERCHANT MARINE

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The Republican party stands for a strong and permanent merchant marine, built by Americans, owned by Americans, and manned by Americans, to secure the necessary contact with world markets for the sale of our surplus agricultural and manufactured products, to protect our shippers and importers from exorbitant ocean freight rates and to become a powerful arm of our national defense.

That part of the merchant marine which is now owned by the government should continue to be improved by economical and efficient management with reduction of the losses now paid by the government through taxation until it is finally placed on so sound a basis that with ocean freight rates becoming normal, due to improvement in international affairs, it can be sold to American citizens.

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The Democratic party condemns the vacillating policy of the Republican administration in its failure to develop an American flag shipping policy. There has been a marked decrease in the volume of American commerce carried in American vessels as compared to the record under a Democratic administration.

We oppose as illogical and unsound all efforts to overcome by subsidies the handicaps to American shipping and commerce imposed by Republican policies.

We condemn the practice of certain American railroads in favoring foreign ships, and pledge ourselves to correct such discriminations. We declare for an American-owned merchant marine, American built, and manned by American crews, which is essential for naval security in war, and is a protection to the American farmer and manufacturer against excessive ocean freight charges on products of farm and factory.

We declare the government should own and operate such ships as will insure the accomplishment of these purposes and to continue such operation as long as it may be necessary without obstructing the development and growth of a privately owned American flag shipping.

## MINING

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The mining industry has experienced a period of depression as the result of the abnormal economic conditions growing out of the Great War. This administration has accomplished much in im-

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

Mining is one of the basic industries of this country. We produce more coal, iron, copper and silver than any other country. The value of our mineral production is second only to agriculture. Min-

## APPENDIX

proving the conditions affecting this great fundamental industry and pledges itself to continue its efforts in this direction.

ing has suffered like agriculture, and from the same causes. It is the duty of our government to foster this industry and to remove the restrictions that destroy its prosperity.

### COAL

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The price and a constant supply of such an essential commodity as coal are of vital interest to the public. The government has no constitutional power to regulate prices but can bring its influence to bear by the powerful instrument afforded by full publicity. When through industrial conflict the supply is threatened, the President should have authority to appoint a commission to act as mediators and as a medium for voluntary arbitration. In the event of a strike the control of distribution should be invoked to prevent profiteering.

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We pledge the Democratic party to regulate by governmental agencies the anthracite coal industry and all other corporations controlling the necessities of life, where public welfare has been subordinated to private interests.

### ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL REFORMS; PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS<sup>1</sup>

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We pledge the Democratic party to a policy which will prevent members of either House who fail of re-election from participating in the subsequent sessions of Congress. This can be accomplished by fixing the days for convening the Congress immediately after the

<sup>1</sup> The platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention in Cleveland contained the following: "We favor such amendments to the Federal Constitution as may be necessary to provide for the direct nomination and election of the President, to extend the initiative and referendum to the Federal government, and to insure a popular referendum for or against war except in cases of actual invasion." . . . "We favor submitting to the people for their considerate judgment a constitutional amendment providing that Congress may by re-enacting a statute make it effective over a judicial veto."

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

biennial national election; and to this end we favor granting the right to the people of the several states to vote on proposed constitutional amendments.

## FEDERAL COURTS

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We favor the extension of the probation principle to the courts of the United States.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

Abolition of the tyranny and usurpation of the courts, including the practice of nullifying legislation in conflict with the political, social or economic theories of the judges. Abolition of injunctions in labor disputes and of the power to punish for contempt without trial by jury. Election of all Federal judges without party designation for limited terms.<sup>1</sup>

## REORGANIZATION OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS<sup>2</sup>

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We favor a comprehensive reorganization of the executive departments and bureaus along the lines of the plan recently submitted by a joint committee of the Congress, which has the unqualified support of President Coolidge.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The improvement in the enforcement of the merit system both by legislative enactment and Executive action since March 4, 1921, has been marked and effective. By Executive order the appointment of Presidential postmasters has

We denounce the action of the Republican administration in its violations of the principles of civil service by its partisan removals and manipulation of the eligible lists in the Post Office Department and other governmental depart-

<sup>1</sup> The platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention in Cleveland further defined the fixed terms for which Federal judges were to be elected as "not exceeding ten years."

<sup>2</sup> See also Democratic plank on the creation of unnecessary bureaus and Federal agencies under the Rights of the States, below.



## APPENDIX

been placed on the merit basis similar to that applying to the classified service. We favor the classification of postmasters in first, second and third class post-offices and the placing of the prohibition enforcement field force within the classified civil service without necessarily incorporating all the present personnel.

ments; by its packing the Civil Service Commission so that the commission became the servile instrument of the administration in its wish to deny to the ex-service men their preferential rights under the law and the evasion of the requirements of the law with reference to appointments in the departments.

We pledge the Democratic party faithfully to comply with the spirit as well as the regulation of civil service; to extend its provisions to internal revenue officers and to other employees of the government not in executive positions, and to secure to ex-service men preference in such appointments.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

*Resolved*, That we favor enforcement and extension of the merit system in the Federal Civil Service to all its branches and transfer of the functions of the personnel classification board to the United States Civil Service Commission.<sup>1</sup>

### THE RIGHTS OF THE STATES

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We demand that the states of the Union shall be preserved in all their vigor and power. They constitute a bulwark against the centralizing and destructive tendencies of the Republican party.

We condemn the efforts of the Republican party to nationalize the functions and duties of the states.

We oppose the extension of bureaucracy, the creation of unnecessary bureaus and Federal agencies, and the multiplication of offices and office-holders.

We demand a revival of the spirit of local self-government essential to the preservation of the free institutions of our Republic.

<sup>1</sup> Separate resolution adopted at the La Follette conference, Cleveland, July 5th.

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## POSTAL EMPLOYEES

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We declare in favor of adequate salaries to provide decent living conditions for postal employees.

## INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

*Resolved*, That we favor the enactment of the postal salary adjustment measure for the employees of the postal service passed by the first session of the Sixty-eighth Congress and vetoed by President Coolidge.<sup>1</sup>

## ARMY AND NAVY<sup>2</sup>

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

There must be no further weakening of our regular army. We advocate appropriations sufficient to provide for the training of all members of the National Guard, the Citizens' Military Training Camps, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, Officers' Reserve Corps, and the reserves who may offer themselves for service.

Until agreements to this end [reduction of armaments by land and sea] have been made we advocate an army and navy adequate for our national safety.

We pledge ourselves to round out and maintain the navy to the full strength provided the United States by the letter and spirit of the Limitation of Armament Conference.

## IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The unprecedented living conditions in Europe following the World War created a condition by which we were threatened with mass immigration that would have seriously disturbed our economic

We pledge ourselves to maintain our established position in favor of the exclusion of Asiatic immigration.

<sup>1</sup> Separate resolution adopted at the La Follette conference, Cleveland, July 5, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> See also planks on Limitation of Armament and the League of Nations, above. The platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention in Cleveland declared for "curtailment of the \$800,000,000 now annually expended for the army and navy in preparation for future wars."

## APPENDIX

life. The law recently enacted is designed to protect the inhabitants of our country, not only the American citizen, but also the alien already with us who is seeking to secure an economic foothold for himself and family against the competition which would come from unrestricted immigration. The administrative features of the law represent a great constructive advance and eliminate the hardships suffered by immigrants under the emergency statute.

We favor the improvement of our naturalization laws and the adoption of methods which will exert a helpful influence among the foreign-born population and provide for the education of the alien in our language, customs, ideals and standards of life.

### FREEDOM OF RELIGION, SPEECH AND THE PRESS

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The Republican party reaffirms its unyielding devotion to the Constitution and to the guaranties of civil, political and religious liberty therein contained.

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The Democratic party reaffirms its adherence and devotion to those cardinal principles contained in the Constitution and the precepts upon which our government is founded, that Congress shall make no laws respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances; that the Church and the State shall be and remain separate, and that no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the United States. These principles we pledge ourselves ever to defend and maintain. We insist at all times upon obedience to the orderly processes of the law and deplore and con-

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

demn any effort to arouse religious or racial dissension.<sup>1</sup>

## INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

Unqualified enforcement of the constitutional guaranties of freedom of speech, press and assemblage.

## THE NEGRO

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We urge the Congress to enact at the earliest possible date a Federal antilynching law, so that the full influence of the Federal government may be wielded to exterminate this hideous crime.

We believe that much of the misunderstanding which now exists can be eliminated by humane and sympathetic study of its causes. The President has wisely recommended the creation of a commission for the investigation of social and economic conditions and the promotion of mutual understanding and confidence.

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We must have respect for law. We must have observance of law. We must have enforcement of law. The very existence of the government depends upon this. The substitution of private will for public law is only another name for oppression, disorder, anarchy and mob rule.

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The Republican administration has failed to enforce the prohibition law, is guilty of trafficking in liquor permits and has become the protector of violators of this law.

The Democratic party pledges itself to respect and enforce the Constitution and all laws.

. . . . .

<sup>1</sup> By a phenomenally close vote the Democratic convention rejected an addition to the above plank reading as follows:

"We condemn political secret societies as opposed to the exercise of free government and contrary to the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution of the United States.

"We pledge the Democratic party to oppose any effort on the part of the Ku Klux Klan or any organization to interfere with the religious liberty or political freedom of any citizen, or to limit the civic rights of any citizen or body of citizens because of religion, birthplace or racial origin."

## APPENDIX

Every government depends upon the loyalty and respect of its citizens. Violations of law weaken and threaten government itself. No honest government can condone such actions on the part of its citizens. The Republican party pledges the full strength of the government for the maintenance of these principles by the enforcement of the Constitution and of all laws.<sup>1</sup>

Recognizing in narcotic addiction especially the spreading of heroin addiction among the youth, a grave peril to America and to the human race, we pledge ourselves vigorously to take against it all legitimate and proper measures for education, for control and for suppression at home and abroad.<sup>1</sup>

### WOMEN IN POLITICS

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We extend our greeting to the women delegates who for the first time under Federal authorization sit with us in full equality. The Republican party from the beginning has espoused the cause of woman suffrage, and the presence of these women delegates signifies to many here the completion of a task undertaken years ago. We welcome them not as assistants or as auxiliary representatives, but as co-partners in the great political work in which we are engaged and we believe that the actual partnership in party councils should be made more complete.

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We welcome the women of the nation to their rightful place by the side of men in the control of the government, whose burdens they have always shared.

The Democratic party congratulates them upon the essential part which they have taken in the progress of our country, and the zeal with which they are using their political power to aid the enactment of beneficent laws and the exaction of fidelity in the public service.

### EDUCATION AND RELIEF

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

The conservation of human resources is one of the most solemn responsibilities of government. There is an obligation which cannot be ignored and which demands that the Federal government shall as far as lies within its power give to the people and the states the benefit of its counsel.

The welfare activities of the government connected with the va-

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

We believe with Thomas Jefferson and other founders of the Republic that ignorance is the enemy of freedom, and that each state, being responsible for the intellectual and moral qualifications of its citizens and for the expenditure of the moneys collected by taxation for the support of its schools, shall use its sovereign right in all matters pertaining to education.

<sup>1</sup> See also references to the prohibition enforcement field force and internal revenue officers under the Civil Service planks, above.



## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

rious departments are already numerous and important, but lack the co-ordination which is essential to effective action. To meet these needs we approve the recommendation for the creation of a Cabinet post of Education and Relief.

The Federal government should offer to the states such counsel, advice and aid as may be made available through the Federal agencies for the general improvement of our schools in view of our national needs.

### CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT<sup>1</sup>

#### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

We recognize the duty of constant vigilance to preserve at all times a clean and honest government and to bring to the bar of justice every defiler of the public service, in or out of office.

Dishonesty and corruption are not political attributes. The recent congressional investigations have exposed instances in both parties of men in public office who are willing to sell official favors and men out of office who are willing to buy them, in some cases with money and in others with influence.

The sale of influence resulting from the holding of public position or from association while in public office, or the use of such influence for private gain or advantage is a perversion of public trust and prejudicial to good government. It should be condemned by public opinion and forbidden by law.

We demand the speedy, fearless and impartial prosecution of all wrong-doers, without regard to political affiliations or position; but we declare no greater wrong can be committed against the people than the attempt to destroy their trust in the great body of their public servants. Admitting the deep humiliation, which all good citizens share, that our public life

#### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

Never before in our history has the government been so tainted by corruption and never has an administration so utterly failed. The nation has been appalled by the revelations of political depravity which have characterized the conduct of public affairs.

We arraign the Republican party for attempting to limit inquiry into official delinquencies and to impede, if not to frustrate, the investigations to which in the beginning the Republican party and leaders assented, but which later they regarded with dismay.

These investigations sent the former Secretary of the Interior to Three Rivers in disgrace and dishonor. These investigations revealed the incapacity and indifference to public obligation of the Secretary of the Navy, compelling him, by force of public opinion, to quit the Cabinet. These investigations confirmed the general impression as to the unfitness of the Attorney General by exposing an official situation and personal contacts which shocked the conscience of the nation and compelled his dismissal from the Cabinet.

These investigations disclosed the appalling conditions of the Veterans' Bureau, with its fraud upon

<sup>1</sup> See also Party Records and Issues, above. The platform proposed by La Follette adherents at the Republican convention in Cleveland contained the following:

## APPENDIX

should have harbored some dishonest men, we assert that these undesirables do not represent the standard of our national integrity.

The government at Washington is served to-day by thousands of earnest, conscientious and faithful officials and employees in every branch. It is a grave wrong against these patriotic men and women to strive indiscriminately to besmirch the names of the innocent and undermine the confidence of the people in the government under which they live. It is even a graver wrong when this is done for partisan purpose or for selfish exploitation.

The Republican administration has already taken charge of the prosecution of official dereliction and it will continue the work of discovery and punishment, but it will not confuse the innocent with the guilty nor digress for partisan advantage from the strict enforcement of the law.

the government, and its cruel neglect of the sick and disabled soldiers of the World War. These investigations revealed the criminal and fraudulent nature of the oil leases, which caused the Congress, despite the indifference of the Executive, to direct recovery of the public domain and the prosecution of the criminal.

Such are the exigencies of partisan politics that Republican leaders are teaching the strange doctrine that public censure should be directed against those who expose crime rather than against criminals who have committed the offenses. If only three Cabinet officers out of ten are disgraced the country is asked to marvel at how many are free from taint.

Long boastful that it was the only party "fit to govern," the Republican party has proved its inability to govern even itself. It is at war with itself. As an agency of government it has ceased to function. This nation cannot afford to intrust its welfare to a political organization that cannot master itself, or to an Executive whose policies have been rejected by his own party. To retain in power an administration of this character would inevitably result in four years more of continued disorder, internal dissension and governmental inefficiency.

A vote for Coolidge is a vote for chaos!

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"We pledge a complete housecleaning in the Department of Justice, the Department of the Interior, and the other executive departments. . . . We pledge recovery of the navy's oil reserves and all other parts of the public domain which have been fraudulently or illegally passed or otherwise wrongfully transferred, to the control of private interests; vigorous prosecution of all public officials, private citizens and corporations that participated in these transactions; complete revision of the water-power act, the general leasing act, and all other legislation relating to the public domain. . . . We favor the recovery of the hundreds of millions stolen from the Treasury through fraudulent war contracts and the corrupt leasing of the public resources."

# POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL PROBLEMS

## CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

The nation now knows that the predatory interests have, by supplying Republican campaign funds, systematically purchased legislative favors and administrative immunity. The practice must stop; our nation must return to honesty and decency in politics.

Elections are public affairs conducted for the sole purpose of ascertaining the will of the sovereign voters. Therefore, we demand that national elections shall hereafter be kept free from the poison of excessive private contributions.

To this end, we favor reasonable means of publicity, at public expense, so that candidates, properly before the people for Federal offices, may present their claims at a minimum of cost. Such publicity should precede the primary and the election.

We favor the prohibition of individual contributions, direct and indirect, to the campaign funds of Congressmen, Senators or Presidential candidates, beyond a reasonable sum to be fixed in the law, for both individual contributions and total expenditures, with requirements for full publicity.

We advocate a complete revision of the Corrupt Practices Act to prevent Newberryism and the election evils disclosed by recent investigations.

## CONCLUSION

### REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

In our form of government, parties are essential instrumentalities. Our government functions best when the Chief Executive is supported in the Congress by a ma-

### DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

Affirming our faith in these principles, we submit our cause to the people.

## APPENDIX

majority of the same political faith, united by common principles and able by concerted action to carry out in an orderly way a definite, consistent and balanced program.

In urging the people to elect a Republican President and Vice President, we ask them to elect to the Senate and House of Representatives men and women who believe in the Republican principles, acknowledge party responsibility and who can be relied upon to keep faith with the people by carrying out the platform which the Republican party now presents and pledges itself to fulfill.

### INDEPENDENT LA FOLLETTE PLATFORM

In supporting this program we are applying to the needs of to-day the fundamental principles of American democracy, opposing equally the dictatorship of plutocracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We appeal to all Americans without regard to partisan affiliation, and we raise the standards of our faith so that all of like purpose may rally and march in this campaign under the banners of progressive union.

The nation may grow rich in the vision of greed. The nation will grow great in the vision of service.





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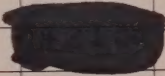









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